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"Take out the feathers! why, that would entirely spoil it."—Page 60.

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CITY COUSINS;

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SEQUEL TO ANNIE SHERWOOD.

O.C.

Knight, ~~Wm~~ Helen (Cross)

WRITTEN FOR THE AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION, AND
REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

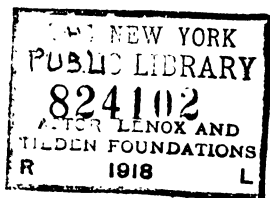
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P R E F A C E.

To be in the world, but “not of the world,” is the difficult position assigned to every disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. The young and inexperienced Christian finds it a situation of peculiar trial, and has need to be clothed with the “whole armour of God,” to be able to contend successfully with “the world, the flesh and the devil.” To those of her own sex, who are engaged in this daily warfare, the writer would commend this volume, consisting principally of facts that have fallen under her own observation, with the earnest prayer

that it may aid them, however feebly, in the conflict. Should it, by the blessing of God, assist "one of these little ones" in running "with patience the race set before us," to Him alone be the praise, who of old wrought deliverance for his chosen people, by a pebble from the brook.

CITY COUSINS.

CHAPTER I.

A LARGE coal fire burned briskly in the breakfast-room of the handsome and luxuriously furnished residence of Mr. Robert Morton, in one of our eastern cities. It was at the close of a cold day in the cheerless month of November, and the wind whistled mournfully without; but its wailings were unnoticed by the cheerful family group, that were seated under the bright gas-light, around a tea-table covered with delicacies. Mr. Morton, who in a rich dressing-gown and slippers sat at its head, was a fine look-

ing man in the meridian of life ; and his wife, whose countenance still bore the traces of what in youth must have been uncommon beauty, presided with dignity and ease, often glancing with a mother's fondness on the youthful faces that were gathered around the board. Of these, Julia Morton, (the eldest,) fair and lovely in appearance, was seated beside her father, and next was her brother Henry, a bright lad of seventeen, with a countenance glowing with health and humour ; while opposite to them were their younger sisters Helen and Maria, the former a merry laughter-loving girl of fifteen, and the latter, (the youngest member of the household,) an affectionate, yet spoiled child of seven years of age. Besides these, at Mrs. Morton's right and next to Henry, sat a young lady, about the age of

Julia Morton, whose travelling dress made her appear as a newly arrived guest. She had indeed just joined the circle of which she now formed a part.

“And so, I suppose, cousin Annie,” said Henry Morton, replenishing his cousin’s plate, as he spoke, “it is entirely owing to your brother William’s marriage and removal to the West, that we are indebted for the pleasure of seeing you here?”

“It would not have been from want of inclination, but I scarcely could have visited the city this winter, cousin Henry, if it had not been for these two events taking place,” replied Annie, smiling.

“Well,” said Mr. Morton, “so that we have her here, at last, we will be satisfied, Henry, and try, now, how long we can keep her,” looking kindly

at his niece ; and added, "How very much you resemble your mother, Annie !"

"There is, indeed, a striking resemblance," said Mrs. Morton. But observing that Annie's cheek was flushed, and that a tear had started to her eye, at the mention of a name reviving so many recollections of all the dear objects left behind her, and understanding the feelings of the young traveller, who had never been so far from home before, she turned the conversation, by inquiring how long it had been since the cousins had met.

"It was two years last summer since we visited at uncle Sherwood's," said Julia. "It was the year before I left school."

"And Miss Julia 'came out' just one year ago, mother," rejoined Helen, laughing ; "you surely do not

forget so important an event in the history of the family."

"That was a delightful visit," said Henry. "Do you remember our fishing excursion, father?"

"When a certain young gentleman of my acquaintance, after several hours' exertion, was rewarded by a few bites and no fish," replied Mr. Morton, laughing.

"And came back with his hands blistered by rowing up the stream against wind and tide," said Helen, archly.

"Do you remember our ride to the village, cousin Annie," asked Julia, "when you drove old Charley? We went to the post-office, because you were expecting a letter from cousin William."

"O! yes," said Annie,—“and our fright by the way.”

"I suppose Mary and little Lucy are very much grown since we saw them," said Mrs. Morton; "and how is your beautiful dog Carlo, Annie?"

"I remember Carlo, mother," interrupted little Maria,—“uncle Sherwood used to hold me on his back, and let me ride round the lawn.”

Amid such questions and answers, the moments flew quickly by, and Annie, seated among her kind relatives around the cheerful fire, had begun to feel quite at home, when the door-bell rang, and some visitors were announced. Her uncle and Julia immediately went down into the parlour, expressing much regret at being obliged to leave Annie, and saying they would not ask her to allow them to introduce her to their friends this evening, as she must feel fatigued. Mrs. Morton soon followed, yielding

to Annie's earnest request that she would not be detained on her account, and Helen's laughing assurance that she and Harry and Maria could entertain their cousin "charmingly;" remarking, as she left the room, "Do not sit up late, girls, but retire as soon as you feel disposed to do so."

"And, now, cousin Annie," said Henry, throwing himself into the large rocking-chair his father had just left, "please to tell us all about cousin William's new home, where it is, and all you know about it, and how Clara likes living in the West."

Harry's question awakened many sad thoughts in Annie's mind, and she shrank from speaking of those so dear to her, from whom she had parted but a few hours before, (it might be for long years,) but she had learned to control and subdue her

feelings for the sake of others, and though it cost her a painful effort, she tried to relate in a cheerful and even animated manner all that her cousins wished to know.

“And you are to stay the whole winter with us,” said Helen. “I am so glad. Dear me,” she added sighing, “I wish I had done with school and lessons, that I might go out with you and Julia! You will have such nice times, going to parties and concerts, and all such places, while I must stay at home, and mope over my books! Well, two years more, and then I shall be free, for Julia left school when she was seventeen, and mother says I may too, and then farewell to all those horrid lessons.”

“And I suppose you will never open a book afterwards,” said Harry; “you will have finished your educa-

tion, and the accomplished and elegant Miss Helen Morton will 'come out,' and will at once be a belle, and have plenty of admirers."

"O! Henry, how can you talk so?" said Helen, colouring. "Of course I shall read a little, such books as Julia does; but, you know, I shall have done with studying. You did not study after you left school, did you, cousin Annie?"

"Yes, dear, I did," replied Annie, who had listened with surprise to the conversation between her cousins; "I had not much time to spend with my books, because I was William's house-keeper, you know, and visited with him among the poor and sick; but I generally passed two hours in his study, and while he wrote his sermons I read such books as he selected for me."

Here Annie paused, and an expression of deep feeling passed over her face, while tears that would no longer be repressed filled her eyes; for O! how vividly did her own words revive the memory of those happy, quiet days, when, with her beloved brother, she had known no wish beyond the useful and pleasant duties of his retired, country home.

“Do not cry, cousin Annie,” said little Maria, putting her arms fondly round her neck and kissing her. Annie returned her caress, but, as she leaned over the affectionate child, her tears fell fast upon her clustering locks. It was but for a moment that she yielded thus to her feeling, when regaining her self-possession, she smiled through her tears, saying, “I seem to have lost all self-control to-night, but I have been much excited

and fatigued by my journey." Helen and her brother exerted themselves to banish her sad thoughts, and an hour passed pleasantly, when a domestic entered, to remind Maria that it was her time for retiring. Helen asked Annie if she did not feel disposed to accompany her, saying, "that she was ready to go, too."

"Shall we not see uncle and aunt again, to-night?" inquired Annie.

"O! no, not unless we sit up late," said Helen. "Mr. and Mrs. Wallace always stay late, and Frank Banker, too; so it is not worth while to wait."

Annie still hesitated; then after a moment's silence she asked in a serious tone, "Do you not have prayers in the evening, Helen?"

"Sometimes—that is, when father has no company. Julia always has

visitors when she is at home in the evening, and mother is generally in the parlour with her, but father gets away whenever he can, and stays with us, and then he has prayers with us and the domestics. We have very few quiet evenings now," said Helen; "father sometimes sighs and talks about the time when we were all little children, and he and mother seldom left us, and had but few visitors; now it is different, for mother says that they must go into society for Julia's sake. Shall we follow Maria, or wait longer? Just as you please, cousin."

"O! I think we may as well follow her," returned Annie, in a discouraged tone, for she longed to be alone, that she might be able to think over the new and startling ideas suggested by the occurrences of the even-

ing, respecting the mode of life her uncle's family led, and how far it would be her duty to conform to it.

"Well, if you will go, I suppose I must entertain myself as I best can," exclaimed Henry, drawing his chair closer to the table, and settling himself in an easy position to read a small pamphlet, the pages of which he had been carelessly looking over the last few minutes—"Helen, is this interesting?"

"Yes, very much so; you will not miss us if you once begin that. So good night, Mr. Henry," and she took up a lamp as she spoke.

Annie followed her example, but paused as she passed Harry. "Shall I see what is so interesting?" she asked playfully. He smiled, and held up the book for her inspection. She

glanced at the title-page ;—it was a romance, by one of the most unprincipled novelists of the present age, published in the cheap form, for the purpose of securing a wide circulation. Annie shrunk back as if from pollution—“ O ! cousin, do you read such books ? ” she involuntarily exclaimed, in a tone of much surprise.

“ Why, what is the matter with it ? ” said Henry, laughing ; “ you look as if it were something poisonous.”

“ And so it is poisonous, and worse than poisonous to the mind and heart, Henry,” returned Annie warmly ; “ and this is what I have often heard father say of them, that a man whose principles and life are such as this author’s were, cannot write any thing pure or excellent.”

“ But, then, it is so interesting—and, besides, Julia and Helen read it,

and mother made no objections to their doing so," argued Harry.

"And I heard father say, he was one of the best living writers," added Helen.

"But did uncle say he approved of his sentiments?" asked Annie anxiously.

"No, he said he did not, but that his style was excellent—and he saw me reading this book afterwards, and only said, 'Helen, I think you might be better employed;' he did not say I must not read it. But come, cousin Annie, there is no use in standing here to discuss this matter, since all the harm it can do me, it has done me already, and I know, now that Harry has commenced it, he will not lay it down until he has finished it."

Annie said no more; but when she was alone in her chamber, adjoining

that occupied by her eldest cousins, she felt her heart sink beneath a weight of sad and perplexing feelings.

“How very different every thing here is from what I had imagined it!” she said to herself. “How can I ever do what is right, or even know what the path of duty is! O! that I were only back again in my own dear home, or had never left it!” She checked the thought, as being wrong, since it was her parent’s wish that she should accept the invitation so often and earnestly presented by her uncle and aunt, backed by the entreaties of her cousin, that she should pay them a long visit, which domestic circumstances had hitherto prevented. She remembered also the precious promises of strength and guidance made by Him who hath said, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean

not to thine own understanding.—In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and he will direct thy paths.” She referred again to some of these blessed sources of consolation to the Christian pilgrim, when perplexed and “troubled on every side,” and then pouring out her heart in prayer, she cast her burden upon the Lord, and with a spirit tranquillized by this happy communion, she laid her head upon her pillow, and soon sunk into a peaceful sleep.

Mr. Morton and his sister, Mrs. Sherwood, were left orphans in early life. His education had been superintended by his guardian, (a wealthy but worldly-minded man,) who, having no children of his own, adopted him as his son, and bequeathed him, at his death, nearly the whole of his property. This estate had come into the possession of Mr. Morton a few years

previous to Annie's visit. His sister, however, had found a happy and desirable, though a more retired home, with an affectionate and pious aunt, who most fondly and faithfully supplied the loss of a mother's care and guidance to her niece, until her marriage with Mr. Sherwood. Even this did not separate them, as her aunt, then quite aged and infirm, consented to break up her own little establishment, and take up her residence with her young relative, whose society she enjoyed till her death.

Though educated with very different views and prospects, Mr. Morton had continued to be warmly attached to his sister, having naturally a kind and affectionate disposition; and their intercourse suffered but little interruption until his marriage, a short time after his sister's removal to her new

home. After this, for some successive years, they seldom met, excepting for a few hours at a time, when Mr. Morton stopped in the progress of his annual visit to an estate left him by his deceased guardian. It was not so much any want of interest in his sister which had produced this change, but the fact that Mr. Morton had married a gay and fashionable lady, in every respect so unlike Mrs. Sherwood that he felt they would not be at all congenial companions. His business engagements, too, so engrossed his time, that he considered it almost impossible for him to leave the city, even for a few days.

Some years had passed, therefore, marked by few and brief meetings between these near relatives, when an event occurred which once more renewed and strengthened their

interest in each other. This was the death of Mr. Morton's youngest son, a lovely and engaging child of ten years of age. On hearing of the alarming illness of little James, Mrs. Sherwood hastened to her brother's house, where her kind and unwearied attentions to the young sufferer, and her warm sympathy with his parents, called forth their gratitude and love, and left an impression on their hearts that could not be effaced. Their deep affliction, too, appeared to be sanctified to their best welfare, for soon after Mrs. Sherwood left them, she was gladdened by the intelligence that they had both professed, before the world, their faith in a crucified Redeemer, and thus fulfilled her most ardent hope and prayer. Her intercourse with them had since been but limited, owing to the claims of a

young and dependent family ; but William Sherwood, during his college days, was most kindly entertained by Mr. Morton and his family, and Harry and his sisters had passed some delightful weeks during several successive summers in the cool rural home of their uncle Sherwood. It had never been in Mrs. Sherwood's power to accede to her brother's wish, that Annie should pass a winter in the city, until the period at which our narrative commences. She hesitated, even then, at the thought of placing her daughter amidst the peculiar temptations of a city life. This hesitancy was increased by a painful apprehension that her relatives, (relieved by the softening hand of time from the heavy pressure of grief,) under a mistaken sense of duty to their children, especially to Julia, who

was just at an age to enjoy society, had begun again to mingle in a world which they had once resolved to forsake. She had perfect confidence, however, in Annie's principles, and not wishing to do any thing which would interrupt the intercourse between the two families, after much prayer and deliberation she concluded, in accordance with her husband's judgment, to part with her beloved child. Annie left home with mingled feelings of pleasure and pain, and under the escort of her brother and his wife, who were on their way to their new home in the West, arrived safely, and was most cordially and affectionately welcomed beneath her uncle's roof.

CHAPTER II.

THE sun was shining brightly when, refreshed by unbroken sleep, Annie awoke, the first morning after her arrival in the city. She started up, surprised that she had slept so late. The door between her own and her cousins' apartment was open, and as she went quietly to close it, she perceived that they were still sleeping. Quite relieved by finding that she would yet be in time for prayers and breakfast, her mind reverted, while dressing, to the conversation with Helen the preceding evening, and she remembered with surprise her remarks about Julia's attendance at parties and concerts, and her mingling so much in society. Annie could not

reconcile this account with the fact, that her cousin had been, for more than a year past, a member of the church with which her parents were connected; nor was she less perplexed, when she recollected what she had heard respecting the omission of evening prayers, whenever it interfered with the convenience of the family, and especially her uncle's allowing his children to read such books as that in which Harry had been interested. How different was the plan pursued in her own home! There the gathering of the family at morning and evening was considered a blessed privilege as well as duty. Every member of the household was expected to be present, unless prevented by sickness,—and in order that even the youngest might not be absent, and all engage in these sacred exercises without the

drowsiness and languor often felt at a later hour, her father assembled them at night, immediately after the evening meal. With respect, too, to the books his children read, Mr. Sherwood was very particular. In her earlier years, Annie never thought of reading any book not first approved by her parents, and since she had left school, she still voluntarily sought their advice. Naturally endowed with easily excited feelings, and a lively imagination, the evil effects of an injudicious indulgence in the light reading of the day would have been very injurious to her mind and heart. In her youthful inexperience, and comparative innocence of the actual sin and degradation of the world, she could not conceive of the injury she would have thus received.

Happy, truly happy, are they who,

guided by the wise and discriminating opinions of friends, whom their Creator has given them to watch over and lead them through the unsuspecting and confiding years of youth, are satisfied to abide by their counsels, and to follow their teaching! They have never hung in absorbed delight over pages polluted by the false and unhallowed conceptions of those who have lived "without God in the world,"—pages abounding with descriptions of the exciting scenes of life, yet so coloured and distorted that one may seek in vain to find their originals on earth,—where vice is depicted in so fascinating an attire, that its true character is forgotten, and where virtue, instead of being presented to us as a combination of Christian graces, is so decked out with fictitious ornaments as to make

real and unaffected piety seem very plain and stern. From such works, with their bright pictures of what all experience teaches must be unsubstantial and unsatisfying happiness, Annie's mind had received no taint, and the strongly expressed condemnation of them by her parents had prepared her studiously to avoid them. She saw that she was now surrounded by temptations, to which she had previously been a stranger, and earnestly did she seek strength from her Redeemer that she might be sustained and directed in the path of duty. She was still seated with her Bible in her hand, seeking to gather from its blessed pages the instruction she so much needed, when she heard a gentle knock at the door of her room. She opened it immediately, and little Maria's bright, smiling face met her view.

"Mother sent me to see if you were awake, cousin Annie," she said in a quiet, gentle tone.

"O! yes, I have been awake and up for an hour," replied Annie, stooping to kiss her. "Are uncle and aunt down stairs, and is it time for prayers?"

"Yes, they are in the breakfast-room."

"O! then, I will go down at once," said Annie, taking the little girl's hand. "Are cousin Julia and Helen there too? I did not hear them go down."

"Helen will be ready in a few minutes, but sister Julia is just beginning to dress," replied the child.

"All ready in time! You are your mother's own child, Annie, for she was always punctual," said Mr. Morton, advancing to greet his niece, as

she entered the room. Annie's heart swelled with pleasure at his words; for what is more sweet to an affectionate child, than to be told of the resemblance she bears to a revered and beloved parent? Mrs. Morton, too, received her most affectionately, and inquired kindly if she had recovered from the fatigue of the journey.

"You need scarcely ask, dear," said Mr. Morton, gazing on her bright and healthful face; "she does not look as if she had ever known fatigue. But where are your sisters, Maria? I cannot wait for them," he said, with an expression of displeasure in his tone, when he had heard the child's answer. "It is strange that they are never ready in time."

"You must excuse Julia," said his wife; "you know she is generally up till a late hour at night, and young

people always like to sleep in the morning." As she spoke she rang the bell for the domestics.

"I cannot feel willing that they should be absent so often," replied Mr. Morton. He looked dissatisfied, and was about to say more, when the entrance of the servants interrupted the conversation.

He opened a large Bible that lay on a side-table and began to read, but before he had proceeded far, he was interrupted by the entrance of Helen; in a few minutes Harry followed, looking half awake, and as if he had just risen. Julia did not join the circle, however, until they were seated at the breakfast-table, when she came in, looking pale and languid.

After the conclusion of their meal, Mr. Morton hurried away to his office; Harry carried his book into the

parlour to complete his preparations for college; Helen and Maria went away for school; Mrs. Morton was busied in superintending her domestic affairs, and Julia and Annie seated themselves at their needlework by the breakfast-room fire.

In the conversation that followed, Annie found her cousin intelligent, amiable and affectionate. They spoke of their past intercourse, and of the events which had taken place since their last meeting, and Annie sought to lead Julia to speak of what she most wished to know,—the change which had been effected in her views and feelings on the subject of religion. From this topic, however, her companion so invariably, yet politely, turned, that Annie soon perceived she wished to avoid it, and therefore relinquished her design for that time, hoping some

other favourable opportunity might occur.

When Mrs. Morton joined them, she reminded Julia of a new article of dress for the neck worn by Mrs. Wallace on the preceding evening, and offered to assist her daughter in preparing one like it, for herself. Materials were accordingly procured, and they were all soon quite busied in modelling and putting it together, her aunt insisting that Annie should have one similar to her cousin's. A long discussion then ensued respecting the prevailing fashions, in which Annie heard more said on the subject of dress than she had ever heard in all her life before. It was interrupted by the announcement of some morning visitors. Julia hastened to make her toilette, in order to receive them, and as they had inquired for "Miss Sher-

wood," Annie assisted her, and after making some slight alterations in her own dress, suggested by her cousin, she accompanied her into the parlour. From that time until the dinner hour, (which was always a late one at Mr. Morton's,) the two girls remained in the parlour, occasionally joined by Mrs. Morton, as her presence was required by the entrance of some of her acquaintances, and were entirely engrossed by a succession of visitors. These generally remained but a short time, passed the usual compliments of the day, addressed a few polite sentences to the young stranger, talked of the latest news in their circle of society, such as the last party, or engagement, or marriage, or failure in business; discussed the appearance or conduct of their acquaintance, and then smilingly departed.

Annie had heard much of the intelligence and refinement of the society in the city. And she knew that in the circle in which her relatives moved she would have an opportunity of enjoying it. She was therefore much disappointed by her first introduction to Julia's friends. The freedom with which the characters and affairs of others were treated, and the judgment (she could not but think, often hasty and censorious, and certainly uncalled for) which was passed upon their actions, shocked and pained her. The conversation was almost exclusively of persons, not of things. There were a few remarks, indeed, respecting a fictitious work, at that time very popular among the lovers of romance, and warm encomiums were bestowed upon it; but this only increased Annie's surprise, as she knew from the name

of the writer, that however fascinating in style and matter, it must certainly be an irreligious book; and from some preceding remarks made by those who thus expressed their admiration of it, she had inferred that they were professed Christians. Indeed, at the close of the morning, she could call to mind but few words that had fallen from the lips of any of their visitors that were worth remembering.

"I fear you are really quite tired; you look so grave, Annie," said Julia, affectionately throwing her arm round her cousin, as they began slowly to ascend the stairs to the breakfast-room, after the last of their visitors had departed. "I was afraid you would find the morning pass heavily."

"Your friends were all strangers to me, you know, dear," replied Annie, making an effort to look more ani-

mated ; "they were very kind and polite, and perhaps I shall feel differently when I know them better."

"Then, you mean to allow that you did not admire them, or enjoy their society much, this morning," said Julia, laughing. "O ! I see you are the same candid, truth-telling Annie, you used to be. But formal calls are very tiresome at the best, and even I am generally glad when they are over, though one must pay and receive them if they live in the city. You good country people are not driven to such a necessity."

Annie was prevented from replying by their reaching the room, where the rest of the family were already assembled for dinner.

"Well, Miss Annie, what do you think of the city, by this time?" asked her uncle.

“O! father, I beg of you not to inquire just now,” said Julia, smiling; “for poor Annie has not been out yet, but we have been bored with visitors all the morning.”

“So you ladies always speak of formal callers; and yet you help to keep up the same tiresome and unmeaning round of visiting yourselves. It does seem to me that your words and actions are very inconsistent!”

“Why, father, what can we do?” replied Julia; “you would not have us live without society; and the hours we select for paying visits are those when persons are generally disengaged and expect to see their friends.”

“O! I don’t object to your visiting, or to your doing so in certain hours, when perhaps it may be most convenient;—the middle of the day, unless during the heat of summer, is

certainly the most agreeable for walking; but why need you call to see people you care nothing about; at whose doors you are glad to leave a card, and who, you are pleased to find, have called when you are out?"

"But that is not true of all our visitors, dear," said Mrs. Morton, coming to her daughter's assistance; "many of them are very pleasant, and we are truly glad to see them."

"Why not confine yourselves to them, then? you would have much more time for sociable visiting."

"This would not be so easy a matter as you might suppose," rejoined Mrs. Morton, as she was distributing the dessert. "We meet with those who are strangers to us; are introduced to them, and this leads to a formal call."

"But why not wait till you know

enough of them to discover whether they would be desirable acquaintances or not? They generally have a circle of their own, and do not value your visits any more than you do theirs."

"O! gentlemen cannot understand our difficulties in these matters," said Mrs. Morton, evasively.

"Well, it does appear to me, at least, a great waste of time," continued her husband, "and I am quite sure there is one person on my side," he added, meeting Annie's eyes, as he spoke, who had unconsciously looked up approvingly. "Am I not right?"

"I do not think I ought to judge from the experience of one morning," replied Annie, blushing. "I am quite a novice in such matters, you know, uncle,—only a country girl."

"But an observing, reflecting one, or I am much mistaken," he answered

laughing. "However, a truce to this discussion. I hope you are going out this afternoon, Julia ; for we must not let Annie lose her blooming looks for want of fresh air. That would be sad indeed."

Julia answered gaily, that she would be responsible for her cousin's taking sufficient exercise, at least for that afternoon, as she had an errand to do in a distant part of the city. On hearing this, Mr. Morton hurried them away, that they might enjoy some of the pleasant sunshine, so soon over at that season of the year, and, suitably equipped for their long walk, they took their way down the most fashionable promenade of the city.

It was quite late when they returned, for Julia stopped so often to admire the attractive and elegant goods displayed in the different stores which they en-

tered, (though she bought nothing,) that the street lamps were lighted when they reached their home. They found only Mrs. Morton and Maria in the parlour; and Julia, begging Annie to take the rocking chair while she seated herself on the sofa, gave her mother a minute account of their walk, dwelling particularly on the new and splendid goods she had seen for sale. Annie listened for a few moments, but, uninterested in the theme, she soon stole quietly away to her own room.

She put away her hat and shawl, and then sat down thoughtfully by the window. The room was lighted by a lamp on the opposite side of the street. Gay carriages whirling quickly by, as though their occupants were anxious to reach their homes before night entirely closed in upon them,—

gentlemen hastening from their places of business to their cheerful and luxurious firesides; groups of laughing boys returning from an afternoon's ramble, and here and there a poor forlorn wanderer seeking a miserable apartment in some obscure alley or crowded court—upon these, and many other objects, quickly passing and repassing, like the figures in a moving panorama, did Annie gaze; while a feeling of loneliness, such as she had never realized before, stole over her. She felt wearied and dispirited. She looked back upon the incidents of her first day's experience in the scenes of city life, (for she was but a child when, on a previous visit, she passed a short time with her mother in her uncle Morton's family :) and was this day a sample of those to come? She reviewed its fleeting hours, to recall, if pos-

sible, some effort made for the good of others, some useful knowledge acquired, or energy put forth in His service, to whom both her soul and body had been consecrated. She sought in vain. "Yes, I may truly say, I have lost a day!" she exclaimed. "The record of its wasted hours has been borne to heaven. But how could I have done differently?"

In answering this question, Annie became painfully conscious that while so far as outward actions were concerned, she could not have altered her conduct, she might have thought and felt very differently. Conscience reminded her of the feeling of mortification, with which, while listening to her aunt's and cousin's discussion on dress that morning, she had thought of her own plain and simple wardrobe, and the secret pleasure with which she

had acceded to their proposal, that a new winter hat she was about to procure should be obtained from one of the most fashionable millinery establishments, and be similar to one which had been ordered for Julia. She remembered, too, the emotions of spiritual pride and vanity that had been awakened in her breast, by a comparison of herself with the strangers to whom she had been introduced that morning, and the vain wishes excited in her mind, by her cousin's admiration and discussion of the articles of taste and fashion which they had encountered in their afternoon's walk—desires which it would have been alike inconsistent with her father's limited circumstances and Christian profession to have gratified. "The things that are seen" had gained the ascendancy in her thoughts, and Christ and

His kingdom and the realities of eternity had occupied but the back-ground. Deeply humbled beneath a sense of her sinfulness and weakness, Annie threw herself upon her knees, and sought forgiveness from Him, who is ever ready to listen to the cry of His weak and erring children. She now understood, as she had never done before, how much grace was needed to enable a Christian to be "in the world," and yet "not of the world," and fervently did she commend herself to His holy care, who only was able to keep her "from falling." Her chamber seemed no longer lonely, when she arose from that sweet communion with her Saviour, and she felt thankful that she could thus turn aside, and, free from all intrusion, find it a place of refuge and peace. She then thought of many little ways in

which she might seek to be useful, even in her present situation, by exerting a right influence over the gay and trifling, with whom she was brought into contact. She hoped to to be shielded herself by the grace of God, from the injurious tendency of her intercourse with them, as she did not seek their society, but was providentially thrown into it.

Alas! she had yet to learn by bitter experience that the greatest dangers to the young soldier of the Cross, (next to those arising from his own weak and sinful nature,) are not from the openly irreligious and careless, but from those, who, bearing the name of Christ, live not for Him, but for themselves. Having professed to renounce the world, they cherish it in their hearts; obeying its maxims, seeking its joys, calling themselves

the disciples of Him, who was "meek and lowly," yet refusing to be "as their Master," and virtually believing themselves able to do what He hath declared they cannot do—serve "God and mammon." These are the stumbling-blocks in the paths of those who, in the freshness and devotion of ardent and grateful spirits, just beginning to taste the sweetness of redeeming love, have determined—not with "carnal weapons," but with the "sword of the Spirit,"—to cast down all things opposed to the kingdom of their Lord. These are they, who not only destroy their own peace and plant their dying pillows with thorns, but are the most dangerous external foes to those who are inexperienced and unstable in the ways of holiness!

Of these difficulties of her present position, Annie Sherwood was entirely

unconscious, and it was with a lightened heart that she descended, at the sound of the tea-bell, from her chamber.

That evening, two young gentlemen (friends of Julia) called to pass the evening with her, and joined the little circle, consisting of Mr. Morton and his wife, and the two girls, who were seated round the centre-table in the parlour when they entered ; Helen and her brother being occupied with their studies in the breakfast-room.

The conversation being general, Annie, as a stranger, was not expected to take much part in it, which was quite a relief to her, as she felt thoughtful and indisposed to converse. She possessed, however, a charm which not all of her sex can claim, that of being an attentive and agreeable listener; and the animated and changing expression of her counte-

nance soon revealed this to the most casual observer, and proved her ability to understand and follow any topic discussed. This rendered her appearance pleasing even to those who were unable to appreciate her real character, while the ease and simplicity of her manners, arising from the absence of an inordinate desire to please, made them peculiarly attractive. So, at least, thought her uncle Morton, as he sat watching her with much interest, for his warm heart had been drawn towards his sister's child, who reminded him so strongly, by her resemblance to that beloved relative, of the sweet companionship of his earlier days. He was surprised that a young female, nurtured in seclusion as she had been, could appear to so much advantage, when contrasted with his own highly accomplished daughter,

- accustomed from her earliest years to the most fashionable society.

“Are you not fond of music, Annie?” said he, as Julia seated herself at the piano, having yielded to the request of her guests, and her cousin’s entreaty that she would sing and play for them.

“Oh! yes! uncle, very fond of it indeed, but I am only a country performer,” she said, playfully, “such as can please our little circle at home.”

Julia’s execution was brilliant, and Annie listened with the utmost pleasure, for she had a fine natural and cultivated taste for music.

Harry, who entered while his sister was seated at the piano, accompanied her on the flute at his father’s request, and Annie was quite charmed with the rich harmony. She was not restless and dissatisfied because she was left

in the back-ground, and for the time comparatively unnoticed, for she did not think of herself, or feel solicitous to be brought forward, but was able to enjoy fully, and sincerely to praise, the performance of her cousin.

She felt truly grateful, and her beaming face as well as her words expressed her thanks, when her uncle proposed, after the departure of their visitors, that she should share, during her visit, the instructions of Julia's music-teacher. Julia, too, was pleased at the thought of their practising together, and so much did Annie's warm heart feel and appreciate the delicate and kind attention to her comfort and happiness exhibited by all around her, that it was sometime after she retired to rest, before she could compose herself to sleep.

CHAPTER III.

HELEN Morton, with a basket of books on her arm, and humming a gay tune as she sprang lightly down the stairs, on her way to school, a few days after Annie's arrival, was passing the door of her mother's room when her sister Julia opened it, and said,

"Stop a moment, Helen ; come in and see our new bonnets. They have just been sent home."

"I am glad they have come in time for me to see them," said Helen, entering.

Her cousin was standing before a large mirror, and at that moment her mother was placing a very elegant hat on her head.

"Oh! how beautiful!" exclaimed Helen. "Such a perfect shape and colour, and the trimming and feathers so exceedingly pretty, and so very becoming to you, cousin Annie! It is just the thing! Really it is exquisite! They are exactly alike, too," she added in the same breath, turning to that which Julia held. "Why you will look like sisters!"

"I am so much pleased it is so," said Julia. "It is surprising how the same colour suits us."

"Yes, I am quite satisfied with my selection," said Mrs. Morton, glancing approvingly at her niece, who certainly had never looked so well in the eyes of her fashionable friends as she did at that moment in the new purchase.

This Annie saw and felt, and to her that moment was one of strong

temptation, for she knew also that the bonnet was a gift from her aunt, who had taken much pleasure in ordering it and having it sent home, without her knowledge. It had been given in such a delicate manner, that, though averse to receiving presents of such a nature, she could not refuse it. She was just at that age when dress and the personal attractions it gives, are subjects of thought and interest in the eyes of a young female. She was surrounded by those who attached much importance to the outward appearance, and if she mingled in the same society with her cousin, she would be expected to dress in a manner befitting the position she occupied. Why should she refuse to do so? Julia was a professor of religion. She was not ranked among the followers of gayety and fashion. This was

true of her aunt also, and could she not, certainly, judge far better what was suitable for her young relative to wear, than she could herself, who had never been accustomed to the etiquette of city life? Would it not seem presumptuous to differ from her in opinion in such a matter, and unkind and ungrateful in the extreme to do so? Had she not better yield what was comparatively a trifling point at most, than, by adherence to her former rule of conduct, run the risk of displeasing her kind aunt? Such thoughts, and many similar ones, passed quickly through the mind of the young girl as she stood, for an instant, before the mirror. She had been surprised, extremely so, by the gay and fashionable appearance of the gift, but she had too much taste not to see that it was most beautiful and becoming, and

emotions of vanity and a desire for admiration had been awakened in her bosom by that glance.

It was but for a moment that the tempter triumphed. There was a voice within that convinced of sin and whispered of duty. Yielding to the conviction, she turned away, and partly removing the hat from her head, said, in an embarrassed yet firm tone, while the crimson flush that spread over her face showed the effort it cost her to do so,—

“I thank you very much, dear aunt. It was very kind, indeed, in you to anticipate my wants; and this hat is truly beautiful. I really admire it; but will you not excuse me if I take out the feathers? For indeed I should not think it right to wear them!”

“Take out the feathers! Why that would entirely spoil it,” cried her

cousins with one voice. What harm can there possibly be in wearing them?"

"They are too gay—too fashionable for me," said Annie, smiling. "I should not know myself in a hat and feathers; and I am quite sure nobody at home would recognise me."

"But you are not going to wear them at home," replied Julia. "A country place is very different from the city. Here everybody wears them, and no one thinks it wrong to do so. Even Mrs. Smith, the minister's wife, wore them in her hat last winter."

"It has so little trimming on it, and the colour is so plain," said Helen, "that it would not be pretty at all without them. It would be entirely too plain and old for you, cousin Annie."

"But I could easily alter the arrangement of the trimming a little, so that there would be enough without them," said Annie, examining the rich ribbon. "Do you not think I could, aunt?" she asked timidly.

"O! do not think of such a thing," interrupted Helen, taking the hat from her cousin's hand and placing it again on her head. "There, you never looked more sweetly, so do let it be so; but good-bye! for I must go;" and playfully kissing her, she took up her basket of books and bounded lightly from the room.

"I do not know why you should think feathers so much gayer than any other trimming for a hat, Annie," remarked Mrs. Morton, in a serious tone, without replying to Annie's question.

"They are gayer than any I have

ever worn, dear aunt," replied her niece. "Mother has always said, that public opinion has made them, in her view, inconsistent as a part of the dress of professing Christians." She would have said more, but glancing at her cousin, who was surveying herself in her new hat at the glass, she hesitated and stopped.

"Then I suppose you think it wrong for me to wear them?" said Julia, in a half earnest, half jesting tone, turning suddenly towards her.

"I did not say so, dear cousin," replied Annie, colouring; "I was thinking of myself and of my own duty. Mother has often told me that the less there was about our dress to attract attention, the more consistent it would be, not only with our profession, but with good taste."

"The plainer the better, then, I

suppose," said Julia, laughingly; "so why do you not adopt the dress of an old lady at once, my fair cousin?"

"That would also be entirely opposed to my rule," replied Annie, smiling; "for I should then become an object of public attention at once. Excessive plainness, or any singularity in the style of dress, is as contrary to it as the opposite would be. Now it seems to me," she continued in a playful tone, "that my pretty hat would attract much less notice, and I should certainly feel far more comfortable in wearing it, without these feathers, graceful as they are."

"I cannot imagine how they should affect your comfort," said Julia, replacing her own hat in the open box.

"Because I should feel that my appearance was not that of one who had renounced the pomps and vanities

of the world," replied Annie seriously. "I suppose it is perfectly right for persons to consult their circumstances and position in society, in deciding as to the richness and costliness of their dress; but ought not the appearance to be marked always by simplicity?"

"I will leave you and mother to settle that," replied Julia. "I shall certainly wear my hat as it is." And so saying she carried it up to her own room.

"And you, Annie," said Mrs. Morton, who had been busied the last few moments in arranging the articles on the bureau, "can do just as you please about yours. I can only say that I am sorry I did not suit your taste better in the selection of it."

She spoke in a cool, quiet tone; but Annie saw by the expression of

her countenance that she was displeased.

“Do not think me ungrateful or opinionated, dear aunt,” she said, her voice trembling in spite of her effort to be calm. “I admire it extremely, and I wish I could wear it as it is, to please you; but I fear it would not be right.”

“Of course you must do as you think right. I would not on any account have you do otherwise,” replied Mrs. Morton in the same tone; “but I must go down now;” and she turned away and left the room.

Poor Annie! She sat silent and distressed for a moment, and then hastened to her own apartment, taking with her the gift that had caused her so much painful feeling. She had no sooner reached it, than closing the

door, she burst into tears, unable longer to suppress them.

“What shall I do? What ought I to do?” she exclaimed; and then from that blessed habit learned in childhood, and strengthened by every onward year, she sought aid and direction from Him, by whom it is never denied, and who, since He “guides a sparrow’s wing,” cannot deem any thing that may cause His children disquietude beneath His notice. Gradually she became more calm; and as the words of the apostle, in reference to the apparel of Christian females recurred to her mind, “whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel,” and the many exhortations of the Holy Scriptures to Christians to come out from the world and

be separate, not loving it nor being conformed to its sinful or foolish customs, she felt strengthened in her purpose to do as her conscience dictated. The fear that she would by doing so displease her kind relatives, that they would think her self-conceited, and disposed to attach an undue importance to trifles, was so very painful to her feelings, that nothing but a strong conviction of duty could have enabled her to conquer it. It required more self-denial and moral courage than any act that she had been required to perform before.

“What would my Sabbath-school class think, if any of them were to meet their teacher arrayed thus?” she thought. “How could I try to check in them a fondness for display in dress, if I set them such an example? I am sure I could not say one word

upon the subject. How should I feel in approaching the table of my Lord with these waving plumes? Would they not seem very much out of place at that sacred feast? My aunt and cousin do not think thus, I know; but since I do, would it not be wrong for me to follow their example in this respect?"

She turned to the fourteenth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, as she asked herself the last question, and read St. Paul's decision in regard to those Christians who doubted whether they ought to conform to certain practices among them; and the judgment of inspiration appeared to her plain, respecting all doubtful questions of duty. Having decided what she ought to do, she felt quite relieved; and after bathing her eyes, that she might efface all traces of tears from

her face, she sat down, and removing the feathers from her hat, arranged the trimmings with her utmost skill and taste, that their absence might be noticed as little as possible, and succeeded in doing so very much to her own satisfaction at least.

When she joined her cousin, prepared for a walk, (for they had arranged to return some calls that morning,) Julia glanced at the hat, and exclaimed, "Well, Annie, I am very sorry you are not willing to dress like me!"

"Indeed, I am sorry, dear Julia; I cannot in this respect," replied Annie, so gently and with so much sincerity in her tone and manner, that her cousin could not but be convinced that she had acted from principle, and not from a mere whim or fancy; and when she added, "Now do you not

think it quite as pretty as it is, and more like me?"

Julia answered frankly, "Well, really, I do not know whether it is not, after all, more in keeping with your appearance, it is so simple and neat;" and for a moment she felt the beauty of the consistency displayed by her young companion, and almost wished to be like her. Annie told her how sorry she felt to disappoint her aunt, (and she feared displease her,) and Julia readily promised to return the feathers, and persuade her mother to think no more about it.

Relieved by the assurances of her affectionate cousin, Annie accompanied her with a light and cheerful heart, that shone in her eye and in her glowing face. Julia looked at her with an admiration she did not hesitate to express; and such is the weak-

ness even of the renewed heart, that never had the young girl been so tempted and beguiled into vain and foolish thoughts as on that morning.

The praises of her cousin, the admiring glances that met her eye from strangers who passed them in the street, and from their acquaintances who recognised Julia; the idle conversation and gossip, with which they were entertained at the houses where they called, with the secret consciousness of looking well and attracting attention, quite filled her mind for the time.

Had she indulged in a momentary feeling of pride or self-sufficiency after deciding what course to pursue that morning, it would have been crushed beneath the bitter mortification and humiliation of the evening hour, when, the excitement having passed, the

frivolous and sinful nature of her thoughts and desires rose up before her. Thus was her heart tried and proved. Thus was she taught anew her utter weakness, and with deep repentance made to cling still more closely to the only ground and hope of her acceptance before God, the perfect righteousness of her Redeemer.

“Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight,” she exclaimed in the words of the penitent Psalmist, “that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest!” “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me! Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me!”

This was the first of many struggles

in the mind of Annie Sherwood. Indeed, there was a daily conflict within her breast; so fruitful a source of temptation was the attention and importance attached to trifling follies by those around her; and she learned to realize, as she had never done before, the difficulties which the Christian encounters, particularly the young and inexperienced, from the "lusts of the eye, the lusts of the flesh, and the pride of life," so solemnly renounced by them in their public and private vows to their divine Master. There was no judicious friend near to warn or shield her from the danger; for Mrs. Morton, who ought to have been an example to her daughters and her niece in this respect, was evidently far more occupied and anxious about their appearing to advantage in society, than with their religious or spiritual

welfare, thinking more of their "outward adorning," than of that, "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price."

Yet the early profession of religion by her eldest daughter had been a source of gratification to her, and she ceased not to offer a daily prayer at the throne of grace, that all her children might be led into the fold of Christ. But she had not such a realizing and settled conviction of the "one thing needful," as to make her anxious or even willing that they should renounce all the pomps and vanities of this world to obtain and enjoy it.

"There is no use in my sending Mary White an invitation for Tuesday night," said Julia,—pausing in the midst of writing some notes to her young friends, inviting them to attend

an evening party. "You know, mother, she will not come."

"You had better send her an invitation, and then she can decline or not as she pleases. She called upon Annie, and it would not be polite not to do so!"

"Well, perhaps I had better send it," replied Julia, taking up her pen.

"Why do you think she will not come, Julia?" asked her sister Helen.

"She never goes to large evening parties," answered Julia.

"Why not?" inquired Helen.

"She thinks it wrong to do so, I believe."

"Wrong! Why I am sure I do not see what harm there can be in it," remarked Helen, "for we never have dancing, you know."

"You must ask Mary for her reasons, not me," said Julia quickly.

“ Well, I am sorry she will not be here ; for I like her so much ; she is always so pleasant and lively. I do not see why you, who used to be so intimate with her, visit each other so seldom now. You once thought there was nobody half so good or lovely as Mary White, and you were always together then. I am sure you would like her, cousin Annie ; she is just like you ; she would suit your taste exactly, I know.”

“ Thank you for the compliment, Helen,” said Annie, looking up from her needle-work and smiling. “ I hope I shall in some way become acquainted with this young lady whom you admire so much. I was pleased with her appearance when she called ; but there were other persons present, and I had no opportunity of conversing with her. The expression of her

countenance struck me as peculiarly sweet."

"She is a very intelligent and amiable girl," said Mrs. Morton, "but has some strict and singular notions."

Helen glanced with a meaning smile at her sister, and said, in an undertone, "Julia did not always think so."

Julia and Mary White had been warm friends and constant companions. They had attended the same school for several years; had been in the same classes in it; and their homes were but a few rods apart. Above all other circumstances that had contributed to produce an intimacy between them, was that they made a profession of faith in Christ at the same time; and for some months afterwards took "sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company." But soon their

paths became different. Julia was beguiled from that straight and narrow way, which is the only safe and happy one to the Christian. The influence in her own home was calculated to lower her standard of religious duty, and to destroy her perception of the broad line which separates between the friends and foes of Christ. She was beautiful and accomplished, and soon became an object of flattering attention from the circle in which her parents moved. Her mother (who, some years previous, mingled but little in society) was led, by her maternal fondness and pride, to seek its exciting pleasures. She accompanied her daughter into scenes of gayety, which, if preferred by those who profess to be but "pilgrims and strangers upon earth," and "to look for a better country, that is a heavenly," certainly show

that they are governed by the maxims and fashions of the world. This soon began to affect her estimate of the value of earthly distinctions; until, almost unconsciously to herself, and without any open neglect of religious duty, she lost the spirit "that was in Christ Jesus," and could scarcely be distinguished from those who had never "tasted that the Lord is gracious." Poor Julia! Flattered and caressed, and with a disposition that inclined her naturally to yield to the influence of those around her, she stifled the whispered monitions of conscience, by following the example of her mother and many others, who were older and more experienced in the profession of a Christian life than herself, and sought once more from the "broken cisterns" of earth that which they cannot supply.

Her intimacy with Mary White gradually declined ; for "how can two walk together except they be agreed?" The parents of Mary were pious and consistent. They sought to expose the snares and temptations laid for her youthful feet, and to strengthen her in a determination to walk with God in a life of devotion to his service ; and thus far she had been enabled to resist all attempts to allure her from her happy onward course.

She did not relinquish society, or deny its claims ; but she chose for her companions, so far as it was possible, those whose spirit was most congenial with her own, and when brought necessarily into contact with others, she sought "to let her light so shine before" them that they might glorify her Father in heaven.

She entered promiscuous society as

a duty, not from choice, or any desire to share the pleasures of this world. Not feeling herself better than others, but with the humility and self-distrust that an acquaintance with her own heart had given her, she sought every opportunity to lead others to the only fountain of true happiness; and every Lord's day she delighted to gather round her a little class of children in the Sunday-school, who were the objects of her most untiring efforts and prayers.

Mary White had long been anxious and distressed about Julia, and had spoken and written to her most earnestly on the subject about which they so much differed; but her remonstrances produced no effect, and caused a still wider estrangement.

She mourned in secret over one whom she loved; and many a prayer

was offered, and many a tear shed for her friend, the only record of which was in heaven. She had been particularly pleased with Annie Sherwood's appearance, during their short interview when she called at Mrs. Morton's. There was an indefinable air of sincerity and simplicity of feeling in the deportment of the young stranger which interested her, and produced an impression on her mind that she was all which Julia had so often, in the days of their happy intimacy, described her cousin to be, superior both in intelligence and single-hearted piety. She longed to become more acquainted with her, and accordingly joined her and her cousins, on their way home from church the first Sunday morning after Annie's arrival.

"I have half a mind to ask a favour

of you, Miss Sherwood," she said to Annie with a smile, after some general remarks respecting the services. "We are greatly in need of a teacher for a little class of girls in our Sunday-school. Miss Smith, who has charge of it, has been called from the city unexpectedly by the illness of a relative, and will probably be absent some weeks. She begged me to find a substitute for her. Would you object to supplying her place?"

Annie hesitated for a moment, thinking that there must be others better qualified than herself for the position. Mary assured her that she knew of no one to whom she had not already applied, but Julia; "and she is unwilling," she remarked with a sigh, which did not escape the notice of her companion.

"I believe aunt does not think her

able to bear the fatigue," she said; "I was disappointed in finding that she was not engaged as a teacher." As she spoke, the inconsistency between her cousin's plea of inability to teach, and her capability of enduring the fatigue attendant on the life she led during the week, rose up before her mind in so strong a light that she was not surprised that Miss White made no reply to her observation respecting the cause of Julia's refusal. Before they reached her uncle's door, where her cousins were waiting for them, she accepted the temporary charge of the little class; and her new friend promised to call for her after dinner that day, to escort her to the Sunday-school.

Annie's first feeling on taking her place among strangers as a teacher, was that of embarrassment; but this

soon passed away when she became somewhat accustomed to the bright faces of the little ones confided to her care; and forgetting herself, she became wholly engrossed by the desire to impart to them the simple truths of the word of God, in an attractive and faithful manner. This was always a pleasant task to her; and never had she felt so happy since her arrival in the city as while thus occupied.

She was almost sorry when the school closed, yet she was not unprepared to share and enjoy the services of the sanctuary; and her experience that day was another testimony to the declarations of the Holy Scriptures, that he that watereth, shall himself be watered.

When, at the close of the day, she sat alone in her chamber, she read the passages of Holy Writ that had

been explained and enforced upon her attention by the minister of Christ.

She sought to impress its instructions upon her memory, and implored the blessing of God to make the preaching of the gospel effectual in the increase of faith and holiness in his people, and in the conversion of the careless to himself.

She felt anew, after the perplexities and distractions of the past week, how valuable and refreshing to the thirsty soul are the privileges of this sacred season.

CHAPTER IV.

"I TRUST my dear Julia will excuse me for declining her kind invitation for to-morrow evening, as she knows my repugnance to attend large companies. I shall hope to enjoy other opportunities of forming an acquaintance with Miss Sherwood, from which I anticipate much pleasure; and I trust she will attribute my absence on this occasion to its only cause,—a conscientious desire to avoid, what to me is always a source of undue excitement and temptation."

"I knew she would not come," exclaimed Julia Morton, as she finished reading aloud the above note to her mother, who, with Helen and Annie, was seated in the breakfast-room on Monday morning. She looked thoughtful and almost sad as she spoke. She felt deeply the reproof conveyed by

the example of her friend, whom she could not but respect. She had begun already to perceive the unsatisfying nature of such scenes of "innocent enjoyments" as Mary refused to enter. Religion no longer afforded her any happiness; for it must be "all in all," or it is nothing; and she could not stifle the warning voice within her soul, or forget the memory of those peaceful days, when she began (as she designed it to be) a Christian life. She was attempting to serve God and mammon, and neither of them repaid her for a divided love and service. She still kept up the habit of daily devotion and of a perusal of the word of God; but the joy she had once derived from these holy exercises, the highest and sweetest privilege of the believer, was lost and gone; and duty alone constrained her to persevere in

what were now but lifeless forms and an unmeaning offering. She would have paused in her course of sinful conformity to the world; but the serious thoughts that arose, in moments of reflection, were banished by the fascinations that society threw around her. Her feet were fast in the net spread by the enemy of her soul, and she was led onward a willing captive.

"I think Mary's scruples are very foolish and unnecessary," said Mrs. Morton, glancing at her daughter.

"But I am sure, mother," said Helen, "you will give her the credit of acting conscientiously. You always say persons must do as they think right. Yet I really do not understand why Mary White should consider it wrong to do what you and Julia, and so many other religious people regard as right."

“Persons have different opinions respecting what is right and wrong, depending very much on their education and circumstances. Mrs. White has always been very strict with her children, and they have imbibed her views.”

“But is there no common standard of right and wrong, mother?” asked Helen, who with much vivacity of manner had an uncommonly active and discriminating mind.

“Certainly. The Bible should be our standard and guide; but persons interpret its precepts very differently. —Julia, have you decided yet about your dress? Suppose you bring it to my room, and I will give you my judgment respecting it.”

“I do think it very strange,” said Helen to her cousin, (after Mrs. Morton and Julia had left them alone

together,) "that good people should have such different opinions about the same thing. Now you think it wrong, cousin Annie, to wear feathers in your hat, while Julia does not; and Mary White will not go to evening companies that mother and Julia think it perfectly right to attend. I do not understand how one is to know what is right and what is wrong."

Helen looked thoughtful and perplexed. Annie had listened with surprise and interest to the whole conversation, and felt troubled by the fears excited in her own mind, that there was something inconsistent in connection with the evening entertainment which had been planned as a compliment to herself. Perhaps it would be wrong for her to be there? How could she consistently join in what Mary White refused to do?

Was not their profession the same? She was roused from her attempt to answer these inquiries by Helen's question.

"If we seek the aid of the Holy Spirit, to understand the will of our heavenly Father, as it is revealed in the Bible," she answered, "and, so far as we perceive what that will is, obey it, we shall be led, dear Helen, into the path of duty. Our Saviour promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who seek it, to guide them 'into all truth;' and with reference to all that may perplex us, He has said, 'They that do my will shall know of the doctrine;' by which I understand, that they who cherish a teachable spirit, and sincerely endeavour to do the will of God, shall know the proper principles on which to act,

and the great truths which they are to believe."

"Which do you think is right, then, cousin Annie; to go or not to go to evening companies?"

"I can scarcely judge from personal experience, Helen; for I have been so situated, as, happily for me, to have few inducements or opportunities of deciding for myself; but, if they produce an undue excitement, or are a source of temptation to us, as Miss White says they are to her, they certainly ought to be relinquished. I do not think a Christian has a right to enter any scene that is calculated to lead his heart from God; to make him value earthly things, or to weaken his desires after perfect conformity to the image of Christ. My faithful pastor has often said, that the Christian's passport should be, 'for me to

live is Christ;' and wherever that cannot ensure him an entrance, he should not be found."

"I think some religious people would be very unhappy if they followed this rule, cousin Annie," said Helen, with her usual vivacity. "To be sure Mary White is not, nor you either; but then you are not like other people."

"Unhappy!" exclaimed Annie, her face expressing the sincerity with which she spoke. "O! you do not know, dearest Helen, what happiness there is in the love and service of God. Try it," she continued, (her feelings overpowering her timidity,) "and you will never think it possible for a Christian to need worldly enjoyments to make her completely happy."

The bright colour that rose to Helen's cheek, and the tears that

started to her eyes, proved that she was not insensible to her cousin's appeal, but the return of her mother and sister prevented a reply.

If Annie had wondered what inconsistency there could be in the attendance of a Christian at an evening company, when given by those of a like profession with herself, she ceased to do so, after a few hours, such as she passed at Mrs. Morton's.

A large company was, on this occasion, assembled in the richly furnished and brilliantly lighted rooms, dressed according to the rules of taste and fashion ; and many of them possessing great personal attractions. The merry laugh and the light jest mingled with strains of sweet music, and all was life and gayety. Those who moved so gracefully there, seemed to have no object but to please and receive

pleasure. Many an eye brightened, and many a fair cheek glowed with a deeper crimson beneath the gaze of admiration and the whispered words of flattery, while the young heart beat more quickly with emotions of gratified vanity; and yet more highly esteemed the value of those adornments, which could thus win for their possessor that which she had learned to prize.

The glittering display of the ball-room was certainly wanting; but had there been less attention or thought bestowed upon the attire of those youthful forms? They had not the measured steps of the merry dance; but there were the frivolous and trifling conversation, and the witty criticism that spared not sometimes even sacred things, and shrank not from darting its poisoned arrows at the good name of those whom they pro-

fessed to regard and treat as friends. Were these less sinful in the eyes of Him, who "looketh not upon the outward appearance?" Were they less dangerous to a weak and inexperienced heart, that, though renewed by the grace of God, still finds "another law" in its members, warring against the law of the mind? Can a child of God, conscious, as she ought to be, of her proneness to err, breathe in sincerity the petition, "Lead me not into temptation," and then voluntarily mingle in such scenes? Can a soldier of the Cross, maintaining as she must, if faithful to her vows, a daily conflict with foes both within and without, go willingly where she knows new enemies will rise up against her, or continue with those that have already caused her hours of bitterness and tears of penitence?

In all the affairs of this fleeting world, such conduct would be pronounced, by sensible people, as exceedingly weak, rash and inconsistent; but the young follower of Jesus, and they who should be her monitors and guides, think not so. Truly the "children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light!"

The first emotions of Annie Sherwood, on her introduction into such a scene, was that of surprise; but this was soon lost in other and deeper feelings. She was ill prepared to encounter any temptation, or even clearly to discern its approach and presence. in the midst of the attention bestowed upon her dress, and the flattering comments of her kind relatives upon her personal appearance. She was as simply arrayed as possible for the oc-

casion; but that very simplicity did not arise from want of thought or design, as it would, had she followed her own natural taste, but was the result of many discussions between her aunt and cousins, and the hints and arrangements of their dress-maker.

Her aunt smiled approvingly upon her, after her toilette was completed. Julia pronounced her dress "perfect." Helen exultingly declared, that her "fair coz" would be the belle of the evening, and her kind uncle whispered, as he kissed her glowing cheek, that his "country lassie would outshine all the city beauties." The very sensibility which enabled Annie so readily to enter into the feelings of others, and rendered her so alive to praise or blame, made such remarks to her peculiarly dangerous. She

was grateful for the kind interest of those whose approbation she valued ; but there were other and different feelings mingled with those of gratitude.

To her uncle's guests, she was, of course, a prominent object of attention on that evening ; and that it was not from courtesy alone, Annie could not fail to understand. Excited and thrown off her guard, she was soon the life of the little group that gathered around her. Unconscious of the lapse of time, she could scarcely believe it possible, when the last carriage left her uncle's door ; and she was told that it was nearly midnight.

Then came the discussion of the incidents of the evening. Harry whispered his jokes, and Helen made playful allusions to the "conquests" Annie had made ; and it was not until

a very late hour, that she found herself alone in her room. She opened her Bible to read as usual, before retiring to rest, but found her thoughts constantly wandering from the sacred page. She closed it and kneeled to pray; but her mind was confused and excited by the scene she had just left, and after several attempts to fix her attention upon the solemn duty in which she would have engaged, she despaired of success, and sought her pillow. She was too much excited to sleep, or to enjoy sweet and peaceful thoughts, but lay awake, recalling all that had passed that evening, thus deepening the impression upon her mind.

At length she fell into a troubled slumber, from which she did not awake until a much later hour than usual the next morning. Of course

she was hurried in her preparations for breakfast, and had less time for her devotional duties. She felt languid and spiritless, and did not enjoy, as she generally did, those moments of communion with God which were wont to be the sweetest of the day. Soon after breakfast, Mr. Morton and Julia went out to fulfil an engagement, and Annie was left alone. She thought she had thus a favourable opportunity of writing home, and began to collect her materials for that purpose; but she felt little disposed to make the exertion. She excused herself from it by thinking her letter, if she should write it then, would not be half so interesting as if written in a more suitable mood; and she concluded to lie down on the sofa and sleep a few minutes, so that she might

feel more active and bright the rest of the day.

Annie was too inexperienced in the effects which late hours and excitement produce upon those unaccustomed to them, to understand the cause of the listlessness (partly physical and partly mental) that oppressed her. She lay with her eyes closed a short time, her mind occupied with unconnected images and thoughts; then from a restless impulse she rose and went down into the parlours. She wandered through the rooms picturing to herself the gay scene of the preceding evening. The flowers that then shed their beauty and fragrance around, though now drooping, were beautiful, and the music sheets still lay where they had been left by the last fair player. Annie approached a table and took up a little volume, very

attractive in appearance, but reading the title, instantly laid it down again. It was a copy of "Childe Harold," and the works of its most fascinating yet dangerous author, to her were sealed volumes. In her childhood, she had promised her father, who had perceived to what peculiar temptations his imaginative and sensitive daughter would be exposed, that she would never drink from that poisoned fountain, and she faithfully adhered in mature years to the promise given in the sweet confidence of a child to a parent so revered and trusted. She wondered that her aunt allowed it a place among the beautiful volumes which graced the drawing-room, or that Julia would prize such a gift; for on a blank page was written her cousin's name, and a few words that told her it was a tribute of esteem from a friend.

But it was a fitting expression of remembrance from a gay young man, an admirer of the dangerous talent of the author, with no principles to make such sentiments repugnant. And such were not only the giver, but the principal part of those who passed their evenings at Mr. Morton's and were admitted to terms of intimacy with his family. They were young men of unblemished reputation in the eyes of the world, but uninfluenced by any motives in the pursuits of life but the love of gain or pleasure, or the world's applause.

Annie did not pursue the train of thought, that, at another time, would have led her to serious reflection ; but taking up a pamphlet from a side-table which she remembered having heard extolled the previous evening, she read the title-page. It did not

profess to be a "novel," nor was the writer's name familiar to her, and turning over a few pages, her attention was arrested by a beautiful passage, and soon, half-unconsciously, she seated herself upon the luxurious lounge beside her, and was deeply engrossed with its fascinating details. Had a profane or impure expression occurred, her mind would have revolted from the contact, and at once condemned the whole; but nothing of this kind appeared. It was a tale of passion, it is true, but it glowed in the breast of one honourable and honoured, and was excited by virtue and loveliness.

The characters were finely drawn, and such as must attract the admiration of the young and ardent, and the circumstances in which they were presented were not so highly coloured

as to appear to such readers unnatural or improbable.

The happiness which at last became theirs, was the result of a strict adherence to integrity, and of a course which, in the eyes of the world, made them worthy to be loved and imitated. Yet, while all this could be said with truth, the tendency of the work on a Christian heart, so far as it had any influence, could not but be ensnaring and delusive.

There were, indeed, in its attractive details, many allusions made to the Supreme Being, as the God of nature and providence ; emotions of gratitude and confidence in His protection, and of adoration of His wisdom and power, were expressed ; but the God of the Bible, as He is there revealed ; "God in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself," was hidden or for-

gotten. The humbling doctrines of the Cross, and the sacrifice of Him who bore it, (the Christian's only source of safety and peace in which alone he may "glory,") appeared not in these winning pages. The depravity and helplessness of man were not openly denied, but virtue, in its most lovely and perfect garb, flourished in the face of opposition and trial, without the aid of Divine grace.

Many careless readers might have read the work, and though, in doing so, they would waste precious moments, and strengthen habits of worldly trifling which the law of God condemns, they would not receive the same injury which would be felt by deeper and more reflective minds.

To the latter class, Annie Sherwood belonged, uniting to this thoughtful turn of mind a quick perception

of all that is beautiful in the creations of fancy and sentiment. Time passed on unheeded while she wandered in this fair world of romance, peopled with, what seemed to her, living images. She had now found a stimulus that banished at once the effects of the reaction which she had before felt. She was again under the influence of false yet pleasurable excitement; and when she reached the end of the work, she closed it with a sigh and relapsed into a long revery. Visions of future happiness, such as colour the day-dreams of the young and inexperienced, which an all-wise and merciful God will not allow his people to realize in this land of their sojourn, floated through her mind, and she did not perceive their vanity or seek to banish them. Her heart was roving after some fancied good, and

the tempter of souls whispered evil thoughts in her ear.

“Why should you renounce a world of such delights as those now pictured before you?” said that seductive voice. “Does God, indeed, require such a sacrifice from one so young, and so fitted to adorn society and to receive pleasure from it? Why need your life be one of self-denial and self-renunciation, when others can be happy and beloved on earth, and gain heaven too, without it? Should so much more be required of you than of them? Why not enjoy life while you can?”

Annie was startled by these thoughts as they rapidly crossed her mind; but though she made an effort to dismiss them, she did not turn to the believer’s “stronghold,” when the enemy of his peace assails him, but yielded to an indefinite sense of wretchedness, that

oppressed her ; and tears (she hardly knew whence they came) stole beneath her closed eyelids. She was roused by the ringing of the street door bell, and springing up, she hastily left the room. A servant soon followed, and announced " Miss White."

Annie had wished for an opportunity of seeing this young lady alone ; for she was the only person she had yet met in the city, whose views and feelings on religious subjects appeared to harmonize with her own, and she had anticipated much pleasure and profit from a more intimate acquaintance with her. But on the present occasion she felt almost sorry to see her new friend, and really wished that she had called at some other time. She did not understand the cause of this sudden feeling of distaste for the society she had before

valued, nor the sensation of pleasure she experienced when she met her aunt and Julia in the hall on her way to the parlour, and they entered it with her.

Before Mary left them, some other visitors were announced, and during the remainder of the day Annie had not a moment to herself. In the afternoon two or three intimate friends of Julia called and paid a long visit. They were very gay and thoughtless girls, but intelligent and accomplished. They had been present on the preceding evening, and their witty, sprightly remarks, (oftentimes severely censorious upon persons and scenes,) amused Julia and Annie exceedingly, though the conscience of the latter did not fail to reproach her for having listened in silence to such conversation.

That was the evening of the lecture at the church where Mr. Morton and his family attended, and they were in the habit of being always present. Annie accompanied her uncle, aunt and Julia ; but she was little fitted for the services of the sanctuary. A cold weight seemed resting on her heart ; and though she engaged outwardly in all the exercises that were wont to afford her so much enjoyment, she now found neither joy nor even peace in so doing. She listened with her usual attention to the lecture, but it failed to excite those emotions of gratitude and love which had so often filled and swelled her heart. She felt that she was wrong, ungrateful and unhappy. She glanced almost unconsciously at her aunt. She was listening with much apparent interest ; but, of course, Annie could not read

her thoughts. She turned to Julia, and saw that she was making an effort to keep awake, while her uncle, with his face shaded by his hand, was certainly unconscious of all that was passing around him. Annie's heart smote her, as she asked herself the question, "How little are we appreciating this precious privilege of listening to the faithful preaching of the gospel, from which so many are debarred?"

She strove to fix her own thoughts more entirely on the subject to which her attention was called, but, though she listened, she felt unmoved and unsoftened by the exhibition of truth, and was still in this frame of mind when the services were concluded. In the aisle she saw Mary White, and Annie almost sighed when she looked

on her happy face, beaming with pure and sacred enjoyment.

On her arrival at her uncle's, she found a letter awaiting her from her brother William. It breathed the same tone of piety and self-consecration that shone so eminently in his life. In all his references to their future prospects, it was strikingly evident, that both his and Clara's brightest expectations of happiness were founded on their hope of being useful. To live for Christ, to devote themselves supremely to His service, was certainly the first and highest wish of their hearts. It expressed their warm and unabated affection for their "beloved sister," and was, indeed, an unanswerable proof, that the love of God in the heart elevates, strengthens and refines the social and

natural ties of life, while it reserves for the Supreme Being that first place in the affections which He alone has a right to claim. Annie carried it to her own room, and opening it, read a few lines and then burst into tears.

“O how little does my dearest brother know,” she exclaimed, “how wretched his sister is!” As she proceeded, her heart was completely softened and subdued. When she had finished it, she bowed in penitence and humility before the mercy-seat, (which, through the sacrifice and intercession of our great High Priest, may ever be approached by the penitent wanderer,) and poured out the emotions of her contrite and broken spirit.

“O, my Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee,” was the language of her heart, “and am

no more worthy to be called thy child. God be merciful to me a sinner." She realized as simply, almost, and even more entirely, her dependence on the merits and righteousness of a crucified and risen Saviour for acceptance and forgiveness, as she did when first, a trembling child, she sought for pardon at his feet. She wished to conceal nothing from Him, whose ear is ever open to the cry of them that seek Him. She confessed all her sin, her ingratitude and her wretchedness, as she could have done to no earthly friend, and she arose, relieved and peaceful. Again she read the letter that she now regarded as the blessed instrument which a long-suffering God had sent to call her back to Himself, and then, in reading the promises of His word, she derived sweet assurances of His power and readiness to

pity and forgive, that were as precious balm to her wounded soul. She reviewed the past, and saw, as she had not done before, the sources of the temptation to which she had yielded. She resolved, by the help of God, to strive against that love of personal decoration and admiration, and the undue attention and thought bestowed upon them, which her present position had constantly a tendency to create, and, as far as possible, not to mingle in such society as that into which she had been thrown the preceding evening. She knew that undue excitement had been the cause of sinful thoughts and feelings while she was under its influence, and had made her usual employments distasteful to her, and had led her to seek a renewal of it, from the fascinating details of romance. As she recalled the rebel-

lions wishes to which the reading of that one little volume had given rise, the precious moments worse than wasted over it, and the flood of foolish fancies it had introduced into her mind, making the duties of life appear dull and irksome, and unfitting her for religious society and conversation ;— she felt that if, to others, it could be harmless, to her such reading was certainly most dangerous and sinful. She then implored divine aid to enable her to resist the temptation from this source, to which she must be exposed, as such books were scattered through her uncle's house, and were constantly read by her cousins.

There are many works, which though they contain no sentiments in direct opposition to religious truth, are yet justly styled, from the careful omission of this subject, “irreligious ”

in their tendencies. That these works have an injurious effect upon a child of a reflective and discriminating cast of mind, and might, without some counteracting influence, lead to infidel thoughts and principles, Annie had previously learned from experience. When quite young, though after she trusted her heart had been renewed by divine grace, she was presented, by a friend whom she was visiting, with some of Miss Edgeworth's attractive books for young persons. Among them was one in which Annie was deeply interested. It contained much information that was new to her, so simplified and illustrated as to be delightful to a child of her inquiring disposition, and she was quite engrossed with it.

On finishing it, however, thoughts were suggested to her, such as wholly

destroyed, for some time, her peace and happiness in the religion of the gospel, and disturbed her confidence in its divine origin; for of all the lovely and attractive characters introduced into that little work, there was not one whose excellence was attributed to the agency of the Holy Spirit.

They were amiable and virtuous in the eyes of men, and submissive and patient in all the trying and adverse scenes of life, apparently from nature and education. Salvation by the cross of Christ, and all the humbling yet glorious truths that spring from it, were never made the foundation, or even introduced into the morality taught throughout its pages. Were the doctrines of the Bible, then, of vital importance? Was there no salvation without their sincere and obedient reception?

Such insinuations, presented by the enemy of her soul, were more effectual than any direct arguments of palpable infidelity; and for some time they haunted the mind of the inexperienced child, disturbing her moments of devotion, troubling her while reading the word of God, and harassing her with disquieting doubts and fears. Her older friends regarded this effect of a work so highly commended, as quite unnatural; but Annie ever after avoided works from the same pen, and in after years was struck with the coincidence, between this little occurrence in her own experience, and that of the distinguished *Robert Hall*, who, for six weeks after reading Miss Edgeworth's works, declared that it quite unfitted him to discharge his ministerial duties with his usual ease and pleasure.

CHAPTER V.

SOME of the invitations to large evening companies which Annie Sherwood afterwards received during her sojourn under her uncle's roof, she was glad to have sufficient reason for declining, and others which she knew not how to refuse without incurring the displeasure of her kind relatives, she accepted, not from choice but as a painful duty.

Though she cheerfully yielded to the wishes of others, it was so evident that her heart was not in such gay scenes, and that they were more and more distasteful to her, that they at length ceased to urge her attendance, and sometimes assisted her in so declining, that she might not seem want-

ing in courtesy. On such occasions her uncle would often remain with her, and send Henry as an escort in his stead, for he much preferred a quiet evening at home, to spending it abroad, and he only went, at any time, to gratify his wife and daughter.

He would have pursued a different and more consistent course of life, had he possessed sufficient decision of character to maintain opinions at variance with those around him. He saw and admired the steady Christian conduct of his niece, though it often surprised him. He could not understand how one, whose natural character was so diffident and retiring, could display so much moral courage in firmly adhering to what she considered right, and resign so cheerfully and voluntarily the admiration, which he knew her personal attractions and

mental endowments were so well fitted to win.

How lovely did she appear in his eyes, as she devoted herself to his entertainment, when they were thus left to pass an evening together! How sweetly did she vary the employments of the fleeting hours, sometimes reading aloud to him, or cheering him by her sprightly, yet sensible conversation, and often accompanying the piano with her voice in some simple or sacred song.

Helen regarded her cousin with all the affection which was ever ready to gush from her warm heart, and the respect which the young and observing so readily yield to consistency and gentleness, while Maria made her the depositary of all her little griefs and secret plans, and thought no one was like her own "cousin Annie."

One day on Helen's return from school, she asked Julia and Annie if they had received an invitation to a party at Mrs. Smith's. On hearing they had not, she told them they were to be invited; that Ellen Smith, who went to school with her, had told her all about it; that it was to be a very large party, and they were to have a dance. While she was talking about it the invitations arrived.

Annie at once expressed her decided wish and intention to decline it.

"Why, Annie, you need not dance," said Julia. "I wish you would go, for Anna Smith always has such pleasant parties; she is a very lovely girl. Do you not remember how much you admired her manners when she was here?"

"She is very attractive in every respect; but I should feel it to be

wrong for me to go, cousin, where I knew there was to be dancing. My parents, I know, would not approve of it, and that would be a sufficient reason for my absence, even if my own principles and feelings were not opposed to it. Dancing has always appeared to me to be so decidedly an amusement that belongs to and marks the world, as distinguished from the church of Christ. Surely, dear Julia, you will not go?"

"I do not see any harm in my going. Of course, I shall not dance; but I cannot think it wrong merely to be a spectator. Why, many who will join in the dance will be professors of religion."

"But will not your presence be understood as an encouragement to them, Julia? Will you not sanction the practice? I should not think it

much less wrong than to take part in it myself; for I am sure the music and graceful movements of the dancers would interest and excite me almost as much as if I joined with them. I should look and smile my approbation, if I said and did nothing."

"Well, I will not urge you to go, Annie; but really I do think your notions about it are too strict."

"May I ask you one question, dearest cousin?" said Annie, in a gentle, earnest tone. "Can you in such a scene realize with pleasure the presence of your heavenly Father?"

"O! you are too serious, Annie. You make these matters of too much importance. I agree with mother in thinking that there is no more harm in dancing than in talking scandal."

"But, because one is wrong, the other is not consequently right. If

there was an unavoidable necessity to do one of the two things, we might argue thus ; but there is no necessity for me to defame or ridicule another because I do not dance. A person is not to be censorious and malicious because he scruples to do an action that might cause offence. I should think it ought to be just the reverse, and that such a person would be kind and affectionate. Is it not wrong for a Christian to do either ? But, surely, dear cousin, we have such high and unfailing sources of happiness, that we need not turn to those from which they, who have drank of no purer streams, seek their enjoyment."

Julia was silent for a moment, and looked thoughtful, and then smiling, said :

" Well, cousin, you may be satisfied on one point,—I shall not dance my-

self; if I wanted to do so, I could not; for I have never learned. Father has always been unwilling that we should."

"I wish he had allowed us to go to dancing-school," exclaimed Helen, who had just returned to the room. "Mrs. Irwin, I am sure, is a very good woman, and she lets Margaret and Sarah go; and now, they have such pleasant little dances when their cousins and their school-friends are there. Mrs. Irwin plays on the piano for them, and they enjoy it so much, while I have just to sit still and look at them. I do feel so vexed sometimes. I am sure there can be no harm in a family dance, such as they often have. If father thinks it improper for us to dance in a large evening company, he might have let us learn, at least, and then we need not have

danced, excepting when there were but few present."

"But do not such little social dances give a taste for the amusement, dear Helen? Would you not feel much more strongly tempted to join in it on public occasions if you had been accustomed to do so at home, or in the circle of your more intimate friends? And would not the evening pass slowly, and seem dull without it?"

"O! Annie, you look as solemn and talk as seriously as Mrs. Wharton, our minister's wife. She would not let her daughters even go to see some beautiful Tableaux at Mrs. Smith's, because she was afraid, she said, they might 'acquire a taste for theatrical representations.' Those were her very words, I believe. Now I suppose you think she did perfectly

right; but I thought it was too bad; I was so sorry for the disappointment of the poor girls."

"If she thought such exhibitions had a tendency to produce the effect you have mentioned, Helen, I certainly think she did right. It seems to me, it would be very unkind, to allow them to acquire a fondness for amusements which she never wishes them to share."

"Then you would condemn Mrs. Irwin for sending Margaret and Sarah to dancing-school, or letting them have social dances and little cotillon parties for their schoolmates?" said Julia.

"I do not wish to condemn any one, dear Julia; but it does seem to me an inconsistent course for a Christian mother."

“But she says girls cannot be graceful without taking dancing lessons; and though she would be deeply grieved to think of her daughters ever dancing in public, she thinks it a pleasant and innocent recreation for them at home, or with only their young friends and a few others present.”

“I should suppose a conscientious mother would prefer her daughters being deficient in grace and ease of motion, if they could only acquire such attractions by learning to dance,” replied Annie,—and the sound of the dinner-bell interrupted any farther conversation.

“O, cousin, do go to Anna Smith’s party,” whispered Helen, putting her arm in Annie’s as they proceeded to the dining-room. “I know she will

be disappointed if you do not; she admires you so much, and her brother George says"—

"Hush! hush! my dear Helen," interrupted Annie, playfully placing her hand before her cousin's mouth, "you must not tell me what he says. I would rather not hear it. I am sorry not to please you, if you really wish me to go; but are you so tired of my society, as to want to send me away from you?"

"Tired of being with you! O! no; but it seems so hard for you to be obliged to give up all such pleasant parties, and stay at home so often."

"Not hard, dear, if I prefer it, which I assure you I do most decidedly."

"You are a queer girl, Annie, a very queer girl," said Helen, as they entered the breakfast-room, "but one

cannot help loving you, that is certain."

"I think I have a plan for this evening that will suit you all, ladies," said Mr. Morton, "even my little Annie. There is to be a splendid concert this evening, and I have procured tickets for you. Here is the notice of it in the morning paper. Both the instrumental and vocal music will be uncommonly fine; for the best performers and singers in the country are to be there."

The girls were all delighted with the thought of attending, especially Annie, whose naturally correct and cultivated taste enabled her to enjoy and appreciate fine music. The evening was charming, and they set out at an early hour, that they might procure good seats. They found few persons present when they reached the con-

cert-room ; but soon the throng began to pour into it, and Annie was startled by the extremely gay and fashionable appearance of the assembly. She had never seen so much beauty and fashion as now passed before her eyes ; and she thought there was a want of propriety as well as of taste in the appearance of many young females, who, with uncovered heads, and a dress suitable only for the parlour, crowded up the aisles, exposed to the gaze of a promiscuous throng.

If she was surprised by their appearance, she was completely shocked by the dress and manners of the female singers, as they appeared on the stage during the course of the evening. About them all there was such a striking want of attention to the precept, that "women should adorn

themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety," that Annie was deeply pained, and at first could not listen with any degree of pleasure to the music of their voices. She glanced at those around her, but read only approbation and pleasure in the smiling faces that were turned towards the performers. She looked at her aunt and cousins, but they appeared absorbed in listening to the voices that filled the spacious hall with the richest melody.

A loneliness, such as she had never experienced before, stole over her. She felt out of place, and a voice within repeated to her soul, the question addressed to the prophet of old, "What dost thou here, Elijah?"

This feeling was deepened by the words of the songs, the most of which were full of sentiments which a Chris-

tian would blush to utter, and which it would be sin to cherish, and a deep flush spread over the cheek and brow of the young girl, as they fell on her ear.

There were, however, some simple melodies that touched her heart, for they bore her back again to her home, and all the sweet joys that clustered round its fireside, and gradually and insensibly her first impressions were, for the time, dissipated. During a pause in the performances, their party was joined by some young gentlemen of Julia's acquaintance, and, excited by the music and the scene around them, much pleasantry ensued between the young people. They were not strangers to Annie, being all of them visitors at her uncle's house, and many of their remarks were addressed to her.

Excited by the music and by the society into which she was thrown, Annie took an animated part in the conversation, and indulged more freely in light and trifling remarks and jests than she had ever done before. These were only interrupted by the re-appearance of the musicians. The songs that followed were popular and national strains, and Annie enjoyed them exceedingly.

She had never before known, by experience, the power of music as she now felt it. Every chord in her heart,—every pulse in her frame thrilled under its influence. Tears of delight started to her eyes, and she had almost forgotten where she was, until her uncle's voice recalled her bewildered thoughts.

"I am very glad to see that you have enjoyed the evening so much,"

he said,—looking at her glowing face with a smile of approbation.

“O, uncle, it has been such a feast!”

“We must let you have as many such as we can, while you are with us, then,” he answered kindly, while they prepared to depart.

In vain did Annie try to fix her attention upon the word of God that night, as, in the solitude of her room, she opened it as usual. The exciting strains of that sweet music still rang in her ears, and many of the flattering remarks of her gay companions came into memory. But with the morning came reflection and sorrow; for one backward glance told Annie of her weakness and of her sin. She felt how entirely unsuited to her Christian profession had been the society and entertainment of the past evening, and how opposed to growth in holiness,

the excitement and vain thoughts produced by her mingling thus with the world.

That morning, as she and Julia were sitting at their needle-work, the latter spoke with warmth of the pleasure they had enjoyed at the concert. "There is to be another next week," she added. "I was so glad to see the notice of it in this morning's paper; we must all go."

Annie was silent, for she was thinking how she could best introduce her own views and feelings on the subject to her cousin, whom she feared to offend. At last she spoke in a gentle tone :

"Do not think me censorious, dear Julia, if I say that I did not like the appearance of those female singers. It seemed to me that it was not modest; and they did not appear to shrink, at

all, from the gaze of the crowded audience."

"I do not wonder that you thought so, Annie; for I did at first; but this is their usual style of dress. One soon gets used to it, and I suppose they, from habit, do not feel as unpleasantly in appearing before such an assembly, as we do in a parlour."

"I was surprised, too, at the words of some of their songs," resumed Annie. "It seemed scarcely proper for us to listen to them. Indeed, dear cousin, to be very frank, it appeared to me doubtful, whether our position in such a fashionable assembly and listening to such sentiments was not an inconsistent one."

"Why, I thought you enjoyed the evening extremely," said Julia, in a tone of surprise. "I never saw you

look so animated ; and both Mr. Jones and Mr. Smith remarked the pleasure your countenance and manner expressed."

"I did, after my first feelings were banished by excitement," replied Annie, while her cheek glowed with self-reproach. "I was delighted, indeed ; but this morning I feel that my first impressions were correct."

"You will condemn by your opinion very many professors of religion, Annie ; for all who sat around us were members of our churches ; and, indeed, some clergymen were present also."

"I do not mean to condemn others, dear Julia," said Annie. "Attendance at such places may not affect all persons (indeed, I presume it does not) as it did me. I am naturally very excitable, and my fondness for

music gives it peculiar power over me."

"I do not know how you could have been improperly affected by it. I really do not understand you, Annie."

"Well, then, my dear cousin, if you will let me be very candid, and promise to forgive me for being so, I will tell you all I have thought and felt about this matter."

Julia assented readily and listened, in silence, to her cousin's explanation. Annie spoke unreservedly of the inconsistency which she felt there was in their being present in such an assembly of the votaries of fashion and pleasure, of the improper emotions such music was calculated to inspire, the many remarks she had made in the conversation with the gay young people they had met there, which she

now so much regretted, and above all, the effect of the whole upon her spirit, and its deadening influence upon her religious feelings and duties.

“And, now, my dear Julia,” she said, “can I, ought I to enter scenes, the tendency of which is to lead me to speak and feel thus? Can I pray, ‘Lead me not into temptation,’ and then go voluntarily where I know I shall meet it? If I were the only person in the world that was so affected, and it should be an innocent source of entertainment to all others, would it not be wrong for me?”

“Your views are too strict, Annie. I do not know any one who thinks as you do, unless it be Mary White.”

“But, apart from principle,”—continued her cousin, more earnestly,—“is it not necessary for our happiness as Christians, that we should avoid every

thing that interrupts our communion with God? We cannot be happy in His service with divided hearts."

The entrance at that moment of the young lady to whom Julia had just before alluded, prevented the necessity of a reply.

Julia welcomed her politely, though with some embarrassment, but Annie's face brightened with pleasure.

"I suppose you were not at the concert, last night," said Julia, smilingly, after they had conversed for a moment on indifferent topics.

"No, I attended the lecture at our church," replied Mary. "I suppose the music was uncommonly fine."

"Yes, you lost a great deal, by not being present. We were all there and were delighted."

"I have no doubt it was very gratifying to those who have a taste for

music, such as you all have. But much as I have enjoyed the music, I could not feel it right to attend."

She glanced inquiringly at Annie, as she spoke.

"O! you and my good cousin Annie perfectly agree on that point," said Julia, reading her inquiring glance. "We have just had a long discussion of the very subject. No! no! I am not going to hear any thing more about it," she continued, "two against one is not fair."

The two girls smiled, and Mary turned the conversation to some other topics. While they were still conversing, another visitor was announced. Annie had never before seen the young lady who entered, and was introduced to her as "Miss Wallace."

She was not favourably impressed by her appearance, for though her

dress was of the costliest materials, it was arranged carelessly; and there was about it a want of neatness that was apparent to the most casual observer. She was scarcely seated, when turning to Julia, and speaking with much rapidity, she said, that she had but a "moment to stay," and unfolded the object of her visit, which was to invite Julia to join a sewing circle, that met weekly, and was connected with their church.

"Now, I know you have nothing in the world to do," she said, without waiting for Julia's reply, "and your cousin, too, I hope will accompany you. Will you not, Miss Sherwood?"

Annie was somewhat startled by this abrupt question, not having been made acquainted with the object of the society; but her embarrassment was instantly relieved by Mary, who

quietly, and in a few words, explained to her its design and operations. "I attended last winter with pleasure," she said, "and would like to do so again this season, but mother's health is not good, and I find my time occupied by other duties."

"Yes, we have been wondering what had become of you," said Miss Wallace, (who had heard her last words in the midst of a voluble detail to Julia of the particulars of a visit she had just been paying to a poor family.) "Is it quite impossible for you to attend this winter?"

"I believe it is out of my power to attend constantly," said Mary, in a gentle, yet decided manner, "without neglecting those duties that have the first and strongest claim upon me, though I shall be happy to assist you occasionally, when I am able to do so."

Miss Wallace scarcely noticed her reply, but descanted at length on the privilege of engaging in those societies, whose object was to promote the spread of the gospel, introducing, as she did so, such allusions to her own exertions, as seemed likely to leave no doubt that she was most laboriously employed in advancing them.

"But, I forget myself," she suddenly exclaimed, standing up. "I meant to stay but a moment; for my friend, Miss Bray, I suppose, is now waiting for me to visit some poor children in the suburbs of the city," and having obtained Julia's half-reluctant promise to attend the circle as often as she could, and Annie's assurance that she would be pleased to accompany her, she hastily bade them good morning.

"I wish we could meet oftener,

Miss Sherwood," said Mary, as she rose a moment after, to take leave. It was not the words, so much as the tone in which they were uttered, and the warm pressure of her hand which accompanied them, that brought the flush of grateful pleasure to Annie's cheek, and she felt that the friendship of the lovely girl would, indeed, be most cheering to her, amidst the temptations which beset her path.

"I cannot express to you how much I wish it," she replied with some emotion.

"Then the point is settled at once," said Mary, gayly; and she turned to Julia, who had just re-entered the room, with an urgent invitation for them to pass the next evening with her.

"So you had a visit from Emma Wallace, this morning," said Helen,

when they met just before dinner; "pray what did you think of her, cousin Annie?"

"I could scarcely judge from so short an interview," replied Annie, evasively.

"O! I suppose, of course, she stayed only a few moments; for she is always in a hurry. But, I do not believe you ever heard anybody talk so fast, or so much about themselves in so short a time, in all your life before, cousin Annie," said Helen, laughing.

"That would be saying a great deal, Helen," replied Annie, gravely.

"Am I not right, Julia?" asked Helen, turning to her sister. "Did she not tell you of her numerous engagements, that she had 'not a moment to spare,' but must hurry away to this benevolent society, or the

other, as though nothing could go on without her?" and as Helen spoke, she imitated Miss Wallace's hurried manner.

Julia laughed and assented; then, recalled by observing the grave countenance of her cousin, "Indeed Emma is a strange girl," she said: "she does nothing but attend to sewing circles and missionary societies, lectures, prayer-meetings and such things. You can never find her at home. She is out from morning till night engaged in such employments. She told me herself, that she seldom spent a single evening in the week with her family. She takes breakfast with them, and that is all they see of her through the day. She rarely returns in time for dinner; and generally swallows a cup of tea and hurries away to be in time for meeting before the hour for the

family meal. Go when you may to an evening service, you will be sure to find Emma Wallace. If it is so stormy that no other female ventures out, she is always there, and often in opposition to the wishes of her parents. Her father once told me that he might as well have no daughter, as to all the enjoyment Emma's society afforded him."

Annie was pained by the picture her cousin had drawn, but she would have been far more so had she known the whole truth of the case; if she could have entered the home of Emma Wallace, and seen the sad effects of her mistaken views of duty upon the family circle there. She was the only member of it who professed to be governed by religious principles; but where was that "beauty of holiness" which should adorn the follower of

Christ? Where was the filial tenderness and devotion of the Christian child, the meek forbearance, the disinterested affection of the pious sister, or the lowly and subdued spirit of one, who, having found peace through the blood of the Lamb, sought to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things?"

To visit the poor and wretched, to relieve their temporal wants, and bring them within the means of grace—to consecrate taste and talent to the extension of the blessings of the gospel, and to love and seek the house of prayer, are precious privileges to the Christian female, and her duty is plain to value and make use of them. If she has the "spirit of Christ," she cannot voluntarily neglect them. But because "the field is the world," is she to overlook and disregard the

claims of those with whom her Creator has connected her by ties of His own creation? Is she to seek the needy and the miserable among the outcasts of society, while those of her own flesh and blood, bound to her by the tenderest ties of nature, as wretched in heart and soul as they, are left to pursue a course of sin and folly, without one effort, from her, to check their onward progress?

Is she to ply her skilful fingers and task her inventive powers to procure the means of sending the word of God to the heathen world, while those of her own household call upon her in vain for exertions to which they have a just claim?

Direct efforts to influence them might be useless, and certainly must prove so, unless supported by their settled conviction of her warm attach-

ment to them, and earnest desire for their welfare. This confidence in her affection she can only obtain by attention to those daily, hourly acts of consideration, kindness and self-sacrifice which cannot be performed without the bestowal of time, thought and effort; and, therefore, these constitute the first duties of the young Christian, next to those she owes to God.

When Mr. Wallace, wearied with the cares and perplexities of business, returned to his family at the close of the day, and seldom failed to miss his daughter from the little circle, and never received from her those gentle and affectionate attentions, so gratifying to a parent's heart, did he feel attracted towards principles and duties which were so clearly at variance with her social obligations?

He did not wish that Emma should

always relinquish her own pleasures for his enjoyment; but he did feel that he had a right to expect she would sometimes do so; at least, that she would pass some evenings with him.

Her mother, too, amid the domestic cares pressing upon her, though surrounded by wealth and luxury, might often have been cheered by her child's sympathy and attention, if she were not abroad, traversing the streets of the city, in search of objects of benevolence.

And could it be expected that her brothers and sisters, in whose innocent pursuits and pleasures she took no part, and exhibited no interest, would sympathize in her plans and employments, or be won by her example to follow her Lord?

Emma Wallace thought of none of

these things. Indeed, she had no time for reflection, and, sad to tell, she often plunged into the round of "out-of-door" duties, with only a hasty glance of the sacred page and a hurried prayer.

Had she passed more time in her closet, she would not have "so learned Christ."

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN Julia and her cousin entered Mr. White's parlours the next evening, they found a few young people already there, who had been invited to meet them. Annie was a stranger to them all, and she had only been introduced to Mary's parents; but she soon felt entirely at home among them.

There was so much real kindness in the reception which she received from the family, so much warmth and sincerity in their welcome, that she soon found herself conversing with perfect ease with Mr. White, who had seated himself near her. While they were talking, a sweet little boy, about

three years of age, came up to him, and climbing upon his father's knee, looked up lovingly into his face. When Annie spoke to him, he at first only nestled closer to his father and hid his face on his shoulder; but encouraged by her winning manner, he raised his curly head and returned her smile; and when, in the midst of a story about her old Carlo, Mr. White was called away, the little fellow no longer hesitated to take the seat she offered him upon her lap.

Seeing Charley so agreeably entertained, his two little sisters drew near also to the stranger; and when tea was announced, and Mr. White returned, he found them all absorbed in listening with childish interest to her account of the poultry yard at her home, and of the walks she and her sisters took through the green mea-

dows, and the wild flowers they loved to gather.

"Come, come, this will never do," said Mr. White, when, after tea, the little girls took their places again beside Annie, and Charley, peeping from behind the sofa on which she sat, showed plainly that he only wanted an invitation to resume his seat; "you must not ask for any more of Miss Sherwood's attention. Perhaps some other time she will be so kind as to tell you another story."

"Do not send them away," said Annie, eagerly, "I love to have children around me."

"It is time for Charley to say, 'good night,' " replied Mr. White. Then calling the little boy to him, he bade him go and kiss Miss Sherwood and ask her to come and see him often.

The child obeyed, though he looked disappointed, and after receiving his father's affectionate embrace and the parting caresses of some of the company who gathered round him, he was led by one of his sisters from the room.

"Mother," said the little girl who remained, (approaching her mother, who had just entered,) "there is a half hour before it is time for me to go to my lessons; may I bring down my historical game and ask Miss Sherwood to help me find out some of the hard questions."

Mrs. White assented, provided her guest would like to do so; and Annie immediately expressing a wish to see them, the child flew, delighted, from the room. The other young ladies had gathered round the centre-table, some of them taking out their sewing

or fancy knitting, and others examining the beautiful books and engravings that were upon it.

“Let us all try,” they exclaimed, as the children returned with the cards; and delighted with the proposal, they quickly distributed them. Mrs. White engaged also in the play, while her husband asked the questions, and, in the innocent mirth that followed, Annie almost forgot that she was not at home again, in the midst of the cheerful circle she so much loved.

After the departure of the children, the little company continued to converse with much animation on general topics of literary or religious interest.

As the evening advanced, they were joined by some young gentlemen. One of these, Annie recognised as a young clergyman, a stranger, who had

assisted Mr. Wharton on the preceding Sabbath. She was much interested at the time of his entrance in examining the beautiful engravings in a copy of the "Pilgrim's Progress, illustrated."

They were new to her, and she had retreated as the company increased, to a retired seat in a corner, and with a young acquaintance was quite absorbed in her occupation. She did not notice that immediately after hearing her name, he had said a few words in a low voice to Mary White, and then turned again towards her.

"I cannot forbear expressing my gratification, Miss Sherwood," he said, approaching her, "in meeting, this evening, the sister of my dear and valued friend, William Sherwood."

Annie started with surprise and

pleasure, at such an unexpected reference to her beloved brother. She had never before met Walter Graham, but she instantly remembered having often heard William speak of him, and the regret he had expressed at their immediate separation, at the termination of their college course; his friend's intention of spending some weeks with him having been frustrated, by the sudden illness of his father, which caused his hasty return to his home in the South. She had heard parts of letters which William had received from him, and he seemed at once like an old friend to her.

Mr. Graham spoke of her brother with all the warmth and interest that tried friendship and Christian esteem impart, and found in Annie a most interested listener.

It was the first time during her

visit to her uncle, that she had found any one who had ever known those dear to her; and she now felt all that delight which they alone can understand, who, separated from home and friends, and thrown amid strangers, suddenly meet with one who has seen and loved the objects nearest to their hearts.

Mr. Graham dwelt with animation upon the happy hours he had passed with her brother, and spoke of many incidents in their college life, of which Annie had not heard before, which plainly showed the invaluable influence William had exerted upon his class, and, indeed, upon all who knew him. His application and success in his studies, combined with his manly and upright conduct, had won for him the approbation and esteem both of his teachers and his young associates.

“We could not but respect his principles,” said Mr. Graham, “though we did not understand them. It was not till after the death of young Morris, of whom, perhaps, you have heard your brother speak, that the effects of his example became evident. He died very suddenly, and under circumstances calculated to make a solemn impression upon our minds. Your brother saw, and sought to use this opportunity of leading us to think of our immortal welfare. He induced some of us to attend the weekly lectures of his faithful pastor,—he persuaded us to read religious books, and in connection with some pious young men, connected with the church to which he belonged, he formed a meeting for religious conversation and prayer for the students. Sometimes

he and his friends were assisted by clergymen, whom they invited to attend, but at others, they conducted it entirely themselves.

“Their efforts received the Divine blessing, for before the close of that term, some of those, who at its commencement were gay and thoughtless, and living only for the world, became consistent members of the church of Christ. Several of them are now ministers of the gospel, and your brother's name will never be forgotten by them.

“One of them, at least,” he continued after a slight pause, and speaking with some emotion, “can never cease to bless God that he was thrown by a merciful Providence in his path, and was led by the influence and prayers of his faithful friend to seek the one thing needful.”

Annie was silent, but her eyes filled with tears.

At that moment the soft notes of the piano were heard in the other parlour, and Mary White came up to them and asked them to join in a sacred air, which was about to be sung.

“Come, Matilda,” she said, addressing the young lady who was sitting with Annie when Mr. Graham joined them, “we want everybody to sing,” and drawing Annie’s arm in her’s, and followed by the gentlemen, she led them to the piano.

Sweet was the harmony of those youthful voices, that now filled and swelled through the apartments, as they sang with taste and skill many simple melodies.

With some of them Annie was acquainted, having often sung them in

her own home, or with her brother and Clara at Burnside, and they recalled tender memories of happy hours passed with those now so far away ; and to others that were new to her, she listened with delighted attention.

So swiftly did time fly by, while thus occupied, that she could scarcely believe it was nearly the hour to separate, when at Mr. White's request, after the singing of a hymn, in which all united, the evening was closed with prayer.

" Oh ! what a happy, happy evening this has been," said Annie to herself, as she shut the door of her apartment, that night,—“ surely

‘The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.’ ”

It was with renewed and strengthened resolutions to persevere in the

Christian's path, and with gratitude to the "Giver of every good and perfect gift," for the enjoyment she had received from such sweet intercourse with his children on earth, that she closed her eyes in slumber.

To her dear mother, Annie wrote often and freely, and did not hesitate to make her acquainted with the trials and perplexities attending her first intercourse with promiscuous society, and Mrs. Sherwood, assured of possessing her daughter's entire confidence, encouraged and directed her, with all the tender faithfulness of an intelligent Christian parent. It was her daily prayer, that her beloved child might be preserved amid the temptations by which she was surrounded. She longed to have her again in her own safe home, but there

were many reasons that made it appear best for her to remain in the city till spring. In her letters, she dwelt on the principles that should influence her daughter's conduct, knowing that if she adhered to them, her duty in particular cases would be made plain to her.

"In regard to conformity to the world," she wrote, upon one occasion, "the Bible lays down broad principles and leaves us to apply them to the peculiar temptations of our different spheres in life. It says, 'Be not conformed to this world,' 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world,' 'Come out from among them and be ye separate.' The spirit breathed in all these commands, is not simply, go not, enter not, but *love* not. If you make the service of the Lord your delight, my beloved

child ; if you engage in it unreservedly and devotedly ; if you seek your happiness supremely from it, you will find it *impossible* to love the world or to be conformed to it. You will understand, as only the child of God can, why it is said, '*ye cannot,*' instead of ye *must* not, 'serve God and mammon.' Whatever disturbs your communion with your Saviour, and excites the sinful desires and 'lusts of the flesh,' you will, (whatever others do,) for yourself, voluntarily and cheerfully renounce. To engage in such a pursuit, or enter such a scene, were you compelled to do it, would be a self-denial, not an indulgence to you."

¹ Annie, blessed with such counsels, and guided by them, found it not difficult to decide the question of duty, with reference to most points of practice ; but it was often very painful to

her, to adhere to the conviction of her enlightened judgment, differing, as she must, from those who were so kind to her, who were older than herself, and had been so much longer the professed disciples of Christ. At the same time, she redoubled her efforts to conform to their wishes in every thing that the word of God did not condemn.

Only He who looketh upon the heart knew the conflict that often passed within; yet, her unobtrusive and firm adherence to what she believed to be right, won for her the respect even of those who thought her notions too strict and severe, while insensibly her sweet example produced its effect upon the circle in which she moved. The worldly-minded professing Christians around her were as stumbling-blocks in her

path, and she found it far more difficult to pursue a consistent course of conduct, when with them, than when with any others.

From the world she might be expected to differ, but it was hard to incur the censure most unjustly bestowed, of standing aloof from them, and saying with the Pharisee, "I am holier than thou." There were other difficulties which, as a young Christian female, Annie was compelled to meet. In the gay circle in which Julia Morton moved, she formed acquaintances with young men, who, however they shone in the ranks of fashion, had no higher principles of conduct, than such as this world sanctions, and were most unsuitable companions for those who profess to live for Him, whom the world neglects and forgets, if it does not despise

Him. It is true, they were possessed of intelligence, refinement, and some of them even of genius, but this only rendered their influence more powerful and injurious, increased, as it was, too, by the "respect" they professed for religion.

In such society, Annie found it, indeed, difficult to manifest the decision and tastes of a Christian. Where Christ and His claims were so utterly forgotten, and earthly objects and pleasures were the themes that engrossed the heart and tongue, it was only by constant, earnest prayer and steadily "looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher" of her faith, that she was enabled still to pursue the path she had chosen. Often had she heard the remark that there was a neutral ground, upon which the people of God and the world could meet,

but if it were so, she never could discern where it lay. In the discussion of literary topics and characters, as well as in their opinions of all around them, she found still a marked difference and a total want of congeniality of sentiment.

The world judges of all things according to its own standard; the Christian, by the word of God, and they cannot agree. Sometimes, by silence, Annie would manifest her dissent from the views advanced by those with whom she thus came in contact, but when her opinion was asked, or she felt constrained to speak, she did not hesitate, fearlessly and firmly, though with the gentleness becoming her sex and youth, to avow her convictions and their foundation. Gladly would she have avoided such society had it been in her power to do

so; and it was as much to escape from it, and to enjoy that which was so much more congenial and profitable, as for the sake of the knowledge to be acquired, that she agreed to a plan proposed by Mary White for her to attend with her a course of lectures on literary and scientific subjects, two evenings in each week.

Being obliged to go at a very early hour, in order to secure a seat, the young friends often had long and interesting conversations before the commencement of the lecture, and their hearts were soon knit together by the sweet and enduring tie of Christian love. Sometimes, when Julia was otherwise occupied, Annie would accompany Mary on errands of benevolence to the poor and destitute, or in a walk in the keen and bracing air, for the sake of the healthy

exercise it afforded, or to visit common friends.

Whatever might be the object of such expeditions, their conversation was seldom, if ever, of this world and its vanities. The gay and fashionable who passed them in the streets of the busy city, as they glanced for an instant on their youthful faces, lighted up with the glow of health and happiness, knew nothing of the enjoyment they experienced. But to each other, the intercourse of the young friends was a source of great pleasure and profit.

Amid all the numerous demands upon her time, and the interruptions resulting from the large circle of society in which her relations moved, Annie found it very difficult, at first, to secure any portion of the day to devote to useful reading. She soon

discovered, however, that by rising an hour earlier than her cousin, and returning to her apartment immediately after breakfast, instead of wasting the next half hour in idly talking over the incidents of the preceding evening, she could always save some time for mental improvement; and sometimes she carried her book down to the breakfast-room, and when her cousin Julia was absorbed in working the cover of an ottoman from the most difficult yet beautiful pattern, Annie gave herself to her quiet and profitable employment. Julia seldom read any thing more substantial than the light literature of the day. She alleged as a reason that she had no time for reading books, that required more thought than she could give, when fatigued with a walk, or with visitors.

She sought entertainment from the pages of the fashionable magazines and other periodicals that were scattered around her. Her taste was gratified and her skill displayed in the exquisitely beautiful pieces of embroidery which graced the parlours, and excited the admiration of her young friends ; but for the cultivation of her mind and heart, she had neither leisure nor inclination. Annie, too, was very much interested in a piece of fancy work she was executing for Clara ; and she often found it hard to resist her desire to give up her plan of daily reading, to bestow her time upon this fascinating employment. She found it as necessary to be watchful and decided in adhering to duty in these little things as in greater.

“How very beautiful,” exclaimed Helen, looking over her shoulder, one

rainy afternoon, as she was busily engaged with her needle. "How delicately you have shaded those flowers, cousin Annie; that rose-bud is perfect. You will finish that bouquet this afternoon, will you not?"

"If I am not interrupted, perhaps I may; but I hardly think it probable, it grows dark so early now."

"Come away! Maria, do not disturb your cousin, she is very busy," said Helen, a short time afterwards, as she saw her little sister laying a new picture-book her father had given her at dinner in Annie's lap, and heard her ask her cousin to read to her out of it. The child looked disappointed and raised her eyes imploringly to Annie.

"No! Do not call her away, my dear Helen," replied Annie, good-humouredly, laying down her needle,

and taking the little girl into her lap.

“Well, you really have the best temper I ever knew,” said Helen. “I do not see how you can always be so patient, cousin Annie. Julia would have scolded and sent her away in a moment, and so should I too. You are really too kind; there is no use in being so.”

“There is use in always trying to do right, Helen,” replied Annie.

“But you always do right without trying.”

“You would not say so, if you knew my heart, Helen,” said Annie, in a subdued tone,—“if you saw the sinful feelings that distress me so often and lead me to do wrong. Just now I felt very, very selfish.”

“You did not show it,” returned

Helen. "If you ever feel wrong, I do not know how you control your feelings so well, cousin Annie."

"By His help alone," whispered Annie, "who has promised his Holy Spirit to aid us in subduing the sinful feelings of our hearts. His promise is, 'Seek and ye shall find,' 'Ask and it shall be given you.'"

There was a tender earnestness in the tone of Annie's voice and manner, that Helen deeply felt, though she did not express the emotion it awakened, but she silently watched her cousin with interest and admiration, as turning to little Maria, she began, in an affectionate and sprightly manner, to read and explain the new story-book. The child was delighted, and the sight of her happy face, and her fond caress, far more than repaid Annie for the little act of self-denial she had prac-

tised, in relinquishing her own pursuits for her gratification.

"Not finished yet," said Helen, looking with surprise at her cousin's embroidery, on returning from school the next day. "Why, you are just where you stopped yesterday. I hurried home, thinking it would be quite done; I wanted so much to see the effect of those dark leaves."

"Thank you, for your interest in my work," replied Annie, smiling. "I am very sorry you are disappointed; but I have not had any time to give to it this morning."

"Why, what have you been doing?" asked Helen, in a tone of astonishment.

"Let me think," returned Annie. "Why, first, Helen, I spent my two hours in reading. Then I had a letter to finish to mother; and then I called

for Mary White to go with me to see that poor woman who was here yesterday. We had a long walk and could not find her house for some time, and stopped to see some of the visitors of the 'Union Benevolent Society' in her behalf, and so I did not get back till a few minutes ago. Now have I not given a good account of myself, Miss Helen?" she asked laughingly.

"O yes! but I should have finished this first, I am sure."

"Then my letter would have been too late for the mail to-day, and dear mother would have been disappointed."

"But that poor woman! Why could you not have gone there this afternoon?"

"I did think of doing so, but it looked so much like rain, that I was

afraid I should be prevented from going at all to-day, unless I went this morning; and we found her so destitute of every necessary comfort, it would have been selfish in the extreme to have deferred calling to see her, for the sake of gratifying my desire to finish my work."

"Well, then, granting both of these to have been necessary, pray why did you not give up your reading, just for this one morning?"

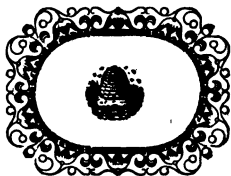
"Because that would have been yielding duty to inclination. I know I ought to spend some time in reading every day; and if I should break my resolution to do so once, for such a trifling cause as this, I should soon do so again, and finally abandon it altogether."

"I give up the point," exclaimed Helen. "You are always right, cousin

Annie, but I have one more question. Why did not Julia go with you this morning, instead of Mary?"

"She was particularly engaged with that beautiful cover," returned Annie, hesitatingly.

"She was not more interested in her work than you were in yours, but was not disinterested enough to give up her own inclination to gratify others. Now this is the truth, and you know it, my pattern cousin, and I am not going to hear any thing to the contrary," said Helen, as she hastily kissed her cousin's cheek, and ran laughing from the room.



CHAPTER VII.

"WHAT is the matter, Harry?" said Annie, one day at dinner, noticing a half-concealed smile playing on her cousin's face, as he most attentively helped her to every thing upon the table.

"Matter with me! Nothing that I am aware of. I hope you are going to enjoy your dinner. You have had a long walk this morning, Julia tells me."

"There is something that amuses you, I am sure, and something about me," replied Annie, smiling, as she detected a mischievous glance pass between Helen and her brother. "You, too, are in the secret, uncle Morton,

and Julia, also ;” and she looked inquiringly around the table.

“Do not mind them, Annie,” said Mrs. Morton, in a meaning tone. “Help yourself, dear, before your dinner is cold.”

“Dear aunt, what plot has been laid for me ?” said Annie, perceiving that she was an object of peculiar attention to all around her.

“Oh ! I have found you out ! How stupid in me not to see it before,” she exclaimed, detecting at that moment the corners of a letter peeping out from beneath her plate. There was a general laugh, as, eagerly seizing it, she read aloud the postmark.

“This was Helen’s trick, not mine,” said her uncle. “It is from William, I suppose. Now do not let it take away your appetite.”

“Give it to me, cousin ; I will keep

it for you till you have finished your dinner," said Henry, holding out his hand for it.

"No! no! I thank you, Mr. Harry," returned Annie, laughing, "I will let it lie quietly here," and she placed it on the table beside her plate. "I am too much of a miser to trust my treasure in your hands."

"Come back as soon as you can, and tell us the news," said Henry, as his cousin stole quietly away, without waiting for the dessert, and ran up to her own room to read her letter.

When she came down again, Annie found that her uncle and aunt had walked out to call on a friend, but that her cousins were waiting to hear what Harry called, a "report from the West."

"The first part of it is from Clara," said Annie, opening the well-filled

sheet, "and consists of domestic details, which, though very interesting to me, I do not think you would care to hear."

"Oh! yes, let us hear it all," exclaimed Helen, eagerly, seating herself on the sofa beside her.

"That is asking too much, Helen," said Julia; "read as much as you think proper, cousin Annie. You know we are not personally acquainted with our new relative, and any thing she says will interest us."

"Dear Clara!" said Annie, a tear starting to her eye: "you could not help loving her, if you knew her! and this letter is so like herself. It is just as she talks, so full of life, and yet so considerate and affectionate."

"Let us have it, we are all ready," said Harry, seating little Maria on his

knee, and whispering to her to be quiet.

Annie read them an amusing and graphic account of Clara's first impressions of Western manners and customs, and of the society she found in the flourishing town where she resided. Towards the close, she spoke warmly of the attention and hospitality she had received from the people of her husband's charge, and expressed her earnest desire and prayer that they might be enabled to return this kindness by unceasing efforts to promote their spiritual good.

"The Lord make us a blessing to them," she wrote, "and grant that in all our plans, and in all that we do and say, we may seek, not our own selfish happiness, but His glory and their best immortal interests."

"William's part of the letter," said

Annie, "is chiefly occupied with an account of a visit he had just returned from paying to a poor minister, who once resided in our town, but removed some years ago to the West, and now lives not far from L——. He preaches to the people in the clearings, and has several flourishing Sunday-schools under his charge." She again took up her letter, and passing over some parts of it, read as follows:—

"I rode, first, to what is called the village of Clearfield, a place about seven miles from this, and inquired of the only man I could see, (there were but four or five houses in the place, and they were built of logs,) for the Rev. Isaac Smith, and was informed that he lived about one mile to the east, through the woods. The kind-hearted man said, I should never

be able to find the way there alone, and so he at once locked up his shoemaker's shop, (a low log hut,) and acted as my guide. By going two miles further to the south, we might have found a path leading to Mr. Smith's house ; but this was too much out of our road ; so we entered the forest, and threaded our way, with my horse and buggy, for a mile or more, dodging a stump here, and a tree there, getting out to clear away the brush which the wind had blown across our track, and compelled often to lift the vehicle with our hands, to twist it through the tortuous path, which we were obliged to make for ourselves between the huge trees that rose up densely around us. There was not a mark to show that any human being had ever been there before us, and it would have been better for me to have

left my little carriage behind, had I not heard from my companion that I could return by a different road. We arrived in safety, however, at the house, just as it began to rain violently. I was disappointed in finding that Mr. Smith was absent, but his wife received us kindly, and we were glad to enter her dwelling and rest. The house, built entirely of logs, and covered with a kind of board, (split, not sawn,) was very low, set down flat in the mud, and was separated into small apartments. In the largest of these, (a room not more than twelve feet square,) were Mrs. Smith and her eight children, two beds, a spinning-wheel, a table made by placing boards on some sticks about three feet long, which were driven into the log wall, the kitchen utensils, and the clergyman's library, consisting of

about two hundred well selected volumes. Mrs. Smith and her daughters were dressed in linsey-woolsey, and every one of them, mother and all, were barefooted. The eldest girl was busy over the fire, cooking, while young ducks and goslings, with the hens they followed, were constantly claiming their share of the shelter which the house afforded, from the heavy shower which was falling without. Immediately about the house was a clearing of about thirty acres.

“I have been particular in this description in order to give you, my dear sister, some idea of the way in which the western pioneer lives. What I saw here, can be seen almost anywhere, in the thinly settled parts of this state. I was impressed, by my visit, with the ingratitude of the world and of myself. Thousands are every

day repining, because they can see a few who seem to surpass them in possessing the means of securing temporal happiness, but they seldom, if ever, turn their eyes in the other direction, and behold the millions who are so far beneath them in this respect. As I rode homeward, my heart blessed God, that these people, though deprived of so many even of the comforts of life, and so isolated in their position, were yet not without the knowledge of the word of God. The precious gospel of Christ is preached to them. Without this, the most costly mansion, the most splendid palace, with all the elegancies and pleasures of refined society, are nothing but a mockery; but, with this, even though we have nothing else, we 'possess all things.' "

The letter then referred to the great

need of Sunday-schools in destitute portions of the West, where often they were the only channels of religious knowledge. "You would be much interested," he said, "if you could visit a school, assembled in a small log-house, at a place a few miles west of our town. Some of the children walk several miles to attend it; and you would be delighted, dear Annie, to see how attentive they are while listening to instruction, and how their faces brighten, when they are favoured with the loan of a library-book, to carry home with them. They are read and re-read, and our Christian friends in the East, who have afforded me the means of procuring them, would feel amply rewarded, could they behold, as I have sometimes done, in my visits during the week, a little group composed of the hard-

working mother and five or six coarsely clothed and barefooted children, listening with the deepest interest, while one of their number reads aloud from the Sunday-school book. It is often a most effectual preacher, and becomes, by the blessing of God, a simple, humble, yet faithful guide to heaven. Surely the 'wilderness and the solitary place,' in many instances, have become already 'glad for them;' and were they as extensively scattered abroad as they ought to be, the 'desert would rejoice and blossom as the rose.' "

* * * * *

Annie folded up her letter in silence, after she had finished reading it. No one of the little circle seemed inclined to speak. At length Harry, who, leaning back in the rocking-chair in which he had seated himself, had been

looking thoughtfully into the fire, said, as though thinking aloud,—“And so my cousin William, with all his talents and acquirements, that might have obtained him almost any position here, has settled down for life in the midst of such scenes as those! Well, it is hard to account for one’s tastes.”

“It was not my brother’s taste, Henry, that led him to this destitute portion of our country, but his sense of duty to those who were without the means of grace, such as are enjoyed in so high a degree here,” replied Annie, earnestly.

“But, why was it his duty more than others?”

“He had youth, health and knowledge, all of which he had consecrated to the service of Christ; there a wide field of usefulness opened before him, and he felt a strong desire to preach

the gospel to those who were so far removed from the sound of it."

Harry looked up with surprise at his cousin; for her tone and manner were much more decided than usual. He had touched a chord in Annie's heart that always awakened deep feelings, and her natural diffidence had for the time vanished. There was a slight flush of excitement upon her cheek; but her usual, gentle expression was still there.

"Well, cousin Annie," he continued, "of course, I suppose William was right in doing what he thought was his duty; but I do not understand why he need to have felt so much interest in those who had no peculiar claim upon his pity or benevolence."

"They were immortal beings, perishing for lack of knowledge; that was a sufficient claim in itself. They

knew not the only way of salvation, revealed in the word of God. This was a powerful appeal to a heart that knew by experience the value of the gospel."

"It must have been a very self-denying duty. You will allow this, at any rate, cousin."

"In some respects it was; for my brother had much to leave that he loved and valued," and Annie's voice trembled, and a tear started to her eye as she spoke; "but, dear Harry, there was One, who for 'our sakes became poor,' and spent all His time in going about doing good; and shall the 'servant be greater than his Lord?' "

"I give up! I give up!"—exclaimed Harry, starting up as he spoke, and placing little Maria in his seat. "I

had really forgotten an engagement I have with George Newton. O! if Arthur Willis was only here, girls," he added, turning to his sisters, "how charmingly he and cousin Annie would agree. They would talk all day on these subjects."

"Poor Arthur!" replied Julia, with a sigh; "I am afraid he is not so well, or we should have heard from him before. Mother feels quite anxious about him. It has been more than two weeks since we had his last letter."

"Perhaps we shall hear from him this evening," said Harry, as he left them. "I will stop at the post-office when I go down town."

Annie had often, during her visit, heard Mr. and Mrs. Morton and the girls speak of Arthur; and from Helen she had learned much of his

history and character that interested her deeply.

He was the oldest son of Mrs. Morton's only brother, a planter in the South. He had been sent to the North to be educated, and was now completing his collegiate course at a New England college. He was a generous, noble, intelligent youth, about a year older than his cousin Henry; and, during his visits to his uncle's family, had greatly endeared himself to them all. He usually passed his short vacations with them, and to these they always looked forward with the utmost pleasure.

Arthur's health had long been delicate; but the last vacation it had been so much so, that his parents had very reluctantly consented to his return to college. His ardent desire to prosecute his studies, however, and the fact

that he could have the advantage of the best medical advice, and would be but a comparatively short distance from his aunt Morton, together with the opinion of their family physician, that there was no cause for immediate alarm, induced them to yield to his wishes.

Shortly after his return to college, the symptoms which had awakened the fears of his parents so developed themselves, that his physician plainly intimated to him, that his case was a disease of the heart, and beyond the reach of his skill to remove. He might live for years, or at any moment, by a sudden attack, his hold on life might be broken.

Arthur heard his opinion in silence and with calmness, and thanked him for his frankness.

Sweet as was life to his young

heart, many and varied as were its attractions, and tender as were the ties that bound him to it, to him the thought of death brought no terror.

To the cause of his Redeemer he had consecrated all his powers, and though the hope of future usefulness in his Master's vineyard was dear to him, he believed that to "depart and be with Christ was far better."

It was in accordance with the tenor of his life and thoughts to say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." "Thy will, not mine be done."

The inward conflict which succeeded, during the many sleepless hours of the night, and languid days appointed him; the rebellious risings of his own will against the will of God, which he yet truly desired to

have done, were known only to Him who looketh on the heart.

When he mingled among his fellow-students, he was still a most pleasant, sympathizing companion. There was no sadness or melancholy on his brow. Yet, those who knew him best, remarked that his tone was more subdued and serious, and there was an expression of heavenly peace upon his countenance; such peace as springs alone from communion with God, and from the contemplation of the glorious realities of another world. With his parents, Arthur had frequent communication, but without concealing from them the truth, he spoke of his health so cheerfully, and was so anxious to remain till the close of the term, that, though uneasy, they still hoped for the best, and that a return to his native air, and relaxation from

his studies, would, at least, very far ameliorate, if not remove his disease.

Mr. and Mrs. Morton had been to see him late in the autumn, and found him looking so well that they thought the physician's report had been too unfavourable, and they expressed this opinion to his parents, and quieted their fears.

Arthur, however, knew that they were mistaken, and the two or three intimate friends, who had witnessed his suffering during his violent attacks of pain, apprehended his danger.

Still, when these attacks were over, and he again took his place among his class-mates, bearing so much the appearance of health, these convictions faded from all minds but his own. In his last letter to his aunt and cousins, his account of himself had not been favourable, and Mrs.

Morton was anxiously looking for another letter at the time of the preceding conversation.

Annie had seen some of his letters, and she had been particularly struck with the clear views of truth and the strong cheerful piety which marked them.

No letter came from Arthur that evening; but a few days after, as Annie was going to her room after a walk, and met Harry on the stairs, he took one from his pocket, and handing it to her, said,

"Here is a letter from Arthur, cousin Annie. It is but fair that you should read it, as you allowed me to hear cousin William's the other day—I am sure you will like it—it will just suit you."

Harry spoke playfully, but his manner seemed forced.

"Thank you! thank you!" said Annie, as he ran hastily down the stairs, while she went to her own apartment and seated herself to read it. The first part of it was on matters peculiarly interesting to Harry, as a college student—a description of a sleigh-ride with some of his classmates, to visit the parents of one of their number, detailed in a very animated manner; and then Arthur spoke of himself, his health and future prospects, and his words were touching and solemn. He knew not "at what hour his Lord might come," and in view of this fact, he wrote freely of his own feelings in the expectation of a sudden summons to "go forth to meet Him," and of his simple, unwavering trust in the atonement and merits of the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. "Being justified by faith,"

he said, "he had peace with God." Utterly lost and sinful himself, he was yet persuaded that, relying thus on One mighty to save, "neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature," should be able "to separate him from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." He concluded by affectionately urging his young relative to seek an interest in the Saviour, and to consecrate his time and talents to His glory. He spoke evidently from the depths of a heart which had known by experience the value and support of the gospel, and Annie felt, as she read it, that Harry must be moved by such an appeal, even if he resisted it.

"Oh! that it might reach his heart,

and lead him, blessed Saviour, to thee!" she mentally prayed.

There was a gentle knock at her door; and hastily wiping away the tears that filled her eyes, Annie rose, and opening it, admitted Helen.

"May I come in?" she asked; "perhaps I am interrupting you," and she glanced inquiringly at her cousin's face, on which the traces of emotion were distinctly visible.

"Not at all, dear," replied Annie, taking her arm and drawing her to a chair beside her own, at the window.

"Harry was so kind as to lend me your cousin Arthur's letter, and I have just finished reading it."

"Is it not beautiful!" exclaimed Helen. "Oh! Annie," she continued earnestly, "mother has just been speaking of Arthur, and she says he is too good to live, but it does seem

so very hard that he should have to die," and she leaned her head on her cousin's shoulder and burst into tears.

Annie was silent for a moment. She saw that Helen was deeply affected. From her first entrance into her uncle's family, she had felt deeply interested in her young relative. Helen's strongly marked character, her independence and firmness of mind, united to her enthusiastic temperament, rendered her an object of interest to all who knew her.

Annie longed most ardently to see this beloved one, a decided, consistent Christian. She had sometimes hoped, when she noticed Helen's serious attention to the preaching of the truth, and the pleasure with which (when able to leave her studies) she would join her in attending the weekly lectures at

their church, that religion was beginning to occupy her thoughts. This hope had been strengthened of late by observing that Helen no longer lingered in the parlour after their return from such services, to listen to the trifling conversation of her sister's friends, but generally retired to her chamber, and once, on following her, her cousin found her in tears, while a Bible lay open upon her table. Annie had silently noticed these indications of seriousness, and by an occasional incidental remark on appropriate occasions, had sought to deepen such impressions; but now, she felt that Helen, by her words and manner, seemed to seek her sympathy and advice. Trembling beneath a deep sense of responsibility, she drew her more closely to her, and said gently:—

“In one sense, dear Helen, Arthur

is not 'too good to live,' for Jesus dwelt in this world, and He was perfectly holy; but if God has given early, to your dear cousin, that spiritual-mindedness which the Bible calls a 'meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light,' and should call him away from the sufferings and trials of earth, to the enjoyment of perfect bliss in Heaven, would it not be a blessed exchange for him? Though your loss, would it not be his exceeding gain? If you were a stranger in a foreign land, far away from the comforts of home, would you shrink from the summons that called you to return to your father's house? And to the Christian,

'Dying is but going home.'

To him death has no sting, and the grave no gloom. He knows, 'in whom he has believed, and is per-

suaded that He is able to keep that which he has committed to Him.' It has always seemed to me, that those who are early called to die were peculiarly blessed—no more to sin, no more to weep, but to be 'for ever with the Lord.' "

"O! cousin Annie," said Helen, in a low, sad tone, "I would give worlds, if I felt as you and Arthur do; but I do not—I cannot. I have been so unhappy lately, dear Annie,—so wretched,—and I am afraid I shall never be happy again."

"And what has made you so unhappy, my dear Helen?"

"I hardly know what it was at first; but I felt dissatisfied with myself and with every thing around me. I wanted something, I did not know what, to make me happy. You always looked as if you were so; and I thought I

would be like you. I have tried, but it is all in vain. I have read the Bible and prayed, and wept, but nothing does me any good. I am no happier; and the more I try to do what is right, the worse I seem to grow. I never was half so wicked before; for, O! Annie, sometimes I feel as if I really hated God. I know I ought to love him; but it seems to me I cannot. Even when I read the account of the sufferings of the Saviour, and remember that He died for me, I do not feel any gratitude, or love towards Him. I know it is the vilest ingratitude; but I cannot help it; and it makes me so miserable that I sometimes wish I could forget all these things, and feel as I used to feel, before you came. Oh! it is dreadful to live so!" and Helen, having thus poured out her heart, wept bitterly.

“It is, indeed, dreadful to live so, dear Helen; but you need not continue to feel thus,” said Annie, solemnly and affectionately. “That compassionate Saviour, whom you do not love, for whose unspeakable mercy you feel no gratitude, still says to you most tenderly, ‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls.’ ‘Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.’ Go to Him in prayer. There tell Him just how vile and wretched you are. Confess that you do not love Him as you should, that you do not feel as you ought. Beseech Him to be merciful to you a miserable sinner, feeling that you will not be saved without his grace, that you can do

nothing towards your own salvation; cry, 'Lord, save, or I perish.'"

"Oh! that I could, dear Annie; but I am so wicked. I cannot believe He would hear my prayer. If I loved Him, or felt at all as I ought, it would be different, and I should not be afraid to go to Him."

"Surely you would not continue in a state of rebellion, Helen, in order to be more acceptable to God. You must go to Jesus just as you are, casting yourself upon Him, and trusting to his gracious promises. He must do all for you, if you are ever saved. He asks nothing of you but simple and entire trust in Him. He will pardon all your sins. He will clothe you with the robe of his own righteousness. He will renew your spirit, and make you his for ever. Do not hesitate—do not fear. Remember, 'It is a

faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,—such as you, my Helen. Will you not believe this?”

While Annie was speaking, the loud sound of the tea-bell summoned them to join the family-circle; and Helen, starting up and begging Annie not to wait for her, hastened to remove the traces of tears from her face. At the table, she was as animated as usual, but her cousin saw it required an effort for her to seem so. She had no opportunity of resuming the conversation that evening. It had filled her with gratitude and joy, mingled with much anxiety. She trusted that God had indeed begun his own work in the heart of Helen, and she felt the responsibility that had devolved upon her, of directing an awakened soul to

the sinner's only refuge—the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

Long after all but herself were wrapt in slumber, that night did she pour forth her supplication before the throne of God, for all so dear to her, but particularly for her who seemed to be inquiring for the way of eternal life.

Annie did not know that her own deportment and conversation had already, by the blessing of God, exerted an influence for good upon those around her. There was not one of the members of her uncle's family who did not feel its effect. Mr. Morton began, himself, to perceive clearly the inconsistency between their mode of life and their Christian profession, and had ventured to expostulate with his wife on the subject.

She, too, felt the reproof conveyed by Annie's example, though she was unwilling to acknowledge it, even to herself. She became more particular in her attendance on the public means of grace, and more strict in her observance of many duties. During the week, there was little in her life or in the spirit of her conversation, to mark her as not of this world; but when occasion permitted, with her more showy attire laid aside, and arrayed in a rich yet simple dress, she came to the table of the Lord, and renewed her vows in his service.

Thus she endeavoured to quiet the whisperings of a conscience which often uttered its warning voice within. Alas! had she compared herself with the standard of the word of God, she would have seen most solemn reason for fearing, that against her might be

brought the charge, "Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead." "For that spiritual life, which is not fed by daily prayer, which does not supply motives and desires and rules of action, throughout our daily intercourse, making the kingdom of God, and preparation for it, the first feeling of the heart, is but a name, at best," and will be found so, at the last great day.

From the commencement of Annie's visit, Julia had, at times, been quite dissatisfied with herself. She could not see her young relative, of her own age and possessing equal personal attractions, capable of winning the same admiration, showing by the whole tenor and spirit of her life, that religion, with her, was "all in all," without being constantly reminded of the difference between them.

"If she is right, then I am wrong," was often the language of her heart. She was already beginning to be sensible of the unsatisfactory nature of earthly pleasures, and the impossibility of enjoying communion with God, while the heart was not wholly given to him.

Memory recalled the happiness which she had formerly experienced, and she could not rest contented with the "beggarly elements of this world."

When she noticed the sweet, tranquil expression of her cousin's face, as she sat in the sanctuary, or came from her closet; as she bent over the sacred page, or read with delighted interest religious books, designed to guide or strengthen the followers of Christ, she almost envied her. At such times, she felt often persuaded to relinquish her gay associates, to

avoid those places and practices which led her soul from God, and to return with an undivided heart to him.

But these were her better moments. With the first temptation, her resolution failed, and these impressions vanished; for there was no faithful, persevering prayer, that they might be permanent and abiding; nor did she seek, in penitence and faith, by a renewed application to the blood of Christ, for pardon and peace.

Even Harry felt the influence of his intercourse with Annie. He could attribute the piety of Arthur Willis to his constitutional delicacy of health, that gave him a disinclination for the pleasures of others of his own age, and produced a seriousness of thought and manner; but he could not attribute his gentle cousin's deportment to any such cause; for she had health,

youth, and much vivacity of spirits, that made her always an entertaining companion at the fireside. He learned from her, not only to respect, but to believe in the reality of that religion which made her so happy and cheerful, without the aid of those excitements on which others depended.

CHAPTER VIII.

A LARGE circle of ladies were gathered in a pleasant room in the rear of Mr. Wharton's church, all busily occupied with their needles. At a table in the centre of the apartment, which was strown with articles cut out and fitted ready for sewing, Mrs. Wharton and some of the older members of the society were seated; while the younger portion of them sat in little groups, as acquaintance, or congeniality, drew them together. As their fingers plied the busy needle, they conversed pleasantly of their occupation, or on such themes as are usually the topics of discourse on these occasions. They had this morn-

ing been very much interested in a little volume that Mrs. Wharton had just finished reading, the writer of which had exhibited in a striking manner the inconsistency of conformity to this world among professing Christians. In one corner of the large room in which they were assembled, a little apart from the others, were seated Julia Morton and her cousin, with their friend Mary and Miss Wallace.

"Shall I join you?" inquired a young lady, who, with her sewing in her hand, approached them.

"O! certainly," said Miss Wallace. "I suppose we need not ask you, Miss Nelson, what you think of the sentiments we have just heard."

"I believe my opinions on such matters are pretty well known," replied the young lady whom she

addressed, seating herself among them. "I do not see how a Christian can have any other opinion;" and without waiting for comment from her companions, she proceeded to inveigh in the strongest terms against all fashionable amusements and worldly society and customs. She alluded to her personal self-denial in these matters, and the unkind remarks and unjust censures passed upon her conduct; and one would have supposed, from her own account, that she had suffered almost as much as a martyr for the sake of consistency in the service of her Master. There was a flippancy and levity in her manner of speaking on subjects which ought never to be touched without seriousness and caution, that Annie Sherwood remarked with surprise and

regret. She glanced at Julia, and saw with pain the effect they were producing on her.

A bright flush was on her cheek, and a slight sarcastic smile upon her lips, and Annie felt keenly how likely to prejudice her against such sentiments, were Miss Nelson's tone and manner of speaking.

Mary White, who read in her friend's countenance her distress, attempted to turn the current of the conversation, by inquiring if her companions had been present at a public religious meeting held a few evenings previous.

Emma Wallace and Miss Nelson had been present, and expressed their unbounded delight, and Mary asked them to give some account of the proceedings.

"Why, were you not there?"

asked Emma, in a tone of astonishment.

"No," replied Mary, "I had fully intended going, but mother was not very well; and father had an engagement out; so I stayed with her."

"Well," said Emma, "that was too bad. But could not your mother have entertained herself for one evening? I will tell you what I did. Just as I was starting, my uncle and two of my cousins arrived from Boston, whom we had not seen for more than two years; but I was determined they should not prevent my going. So I left them with the rest of the family, and hurried away. I do not think we ought to allow such little things to keep us at home."

"Not if duty calls us abroad," replied Mary; "but might there not be a question, Emma, as to what is our

duty under certain circumstances, whether to go or stay?"

"But, certainly it was a much more profitable way of spending the evening. If I had remained at home, I should have passed it listening to conversation that could not have done me half the good; for my cousins, though very amiable and pleasant girls, are entirely gay and careless. It seems to me, that the less we have to do with such persons, the better it is for us."

"I did not mean to censure your conduct, my dear Emma," answered Mary, smiling. "My remark was only a general one. I was thinking of an observation I heard Mr. Wharton make the other day. He said, 'that our duties are like the circles of a whirlpool, and that the innermost includes home.'"

"But, tell me candidly, Mary, what would you have done, had you been placed in my circumstances?" asked Emma.

"I do not suppose I am a fair judge," replied Mary, colouring; "but, do you not think, that by giving up our own inclinations, sometimes, in such matters, for the sake of pleasing our relatives, who do not feel as we do,—thus showing that we are willing to make some sacrifices for their pleasure,—we might, perhaps, in the end, induce them to attend with us upon the means of grace, and at least prevent them from thinking that we are selfish, and felt no interest in them?"

"Then, I suppose you would have me give up visiting the poor, and all other 'out-of-door' duties, while my

cousins are here, and devote myself entirely to them."

"Nay, Emma, I am not going to judge what is your duty," replied Mary, playfully, "that is your province, not mine. I only mean, as a general thing, that all we can do, without compromising our principles, to make religion appear attractive in the eyes of others, it seems to me that we are bound to do. You know the apostle Paul commands us to think upon those things that are 'pure' and 'lovely' and of 'good report.'"

"But surely, Miss White, you would not have a Christian seek the society of the worldly, for the sake of trying to influence them aright," said Miss Nelson, while Emma, looking thoughtfully, continued to sew in silence.

"Not from choice, certainly," re-

plied Mary, "but do not you think there is a difference between our relatives and other people?"

"I am sure they are not any more congenial," said Emma, with a sigh.

"But Providence has bound us to them by ties that cannot be broken, or disregarded with impunity. We have duties imposed upon us in connection with them, from which we cannot release ourselves. It seems to me that home should be the centre of our influence, and from this point we ought to extend it so far as we have 'time and opportunity.' But I believe you were going to give us an account of the meeting on Tuesday evening," she continued—not wishing to appear dictatorial, and feeling that she had said enough. "You remember, Annie, Mr. Graham told us he

thought it would be unusually interesting."

"So it was, indeed," replied Miss Nelson, and she proceeded to give a history of the meeting, dwelling, however, much more upon the manners and appearance of the speakers, and upon her pleasure in listening to them, than upon what they said, and interspersing her narrative with the surmises and reports in relation to a certain popular young clergyman, who was present, and particularly charmed the audience by his fine voice and graceful address.

Julia Morton glanced, mischievously, at her cousin, and could not help smiling at the expression of annoyance upon her open and ingenuous face.

"I wonder if she has ever heard our friend, Mr. Graham, speak!" she

said to Annie, in an under-tone, pretending to ask her advice about her work.

"And what do you think of our little book, young ladies?" inquired Mrs. Wharton, who at that moment joined them.

"Oh! we think it very interesting and excellent," replied Emma Wallace.

"Is this your opinion, too, Miss Sherwood?" continued she, kindly. "This is your first introduction to city life, I believe."

Annie answered modestly, yet with so much propriety and discrimination, that the high estimate which Mrs. Wharton, from a slight acquaintance, had felt disposed to form of her, was raised. From her knowledge of Mr. Morton's family circle, too, she was not less disposed to feel interested in

Annie, of whom she had heard Mary White speak, in the warmest terms of admiration.

“There is one point on which, I think, the author might have been a little more explicit,” said Mrs. Wharton, as she seated herself among them, “and that is, impressing upon the minds of her youthful readers the duty of cultivating all innocent accomplishments for which they have any natural taste, if they find, by doing so, they can afford pleasure to others, particularly to their parents and brothers and sisters. For instance, I have known young ladies, who have had no expense spared in giving them proficiency in music, entirely neglect practising, and lose gradually the skill they professed, as soon as they adopted religious principles; this, I think, is a sad mistake.”

“But it seems such a waste of time, to spend it at the piano,” said Emma.

“Not if by doing so we can add to the enjoyment of those we love,” replied Mrs. Wharton. “You know, my dear Emma, one of our first earthly objects should be to make home happy.”

“But do you not think, Mrs. Wharton, that accomplishments lead to too much vanity and display?” inquired Miss Nelson.

“They need not, and they will not, when acquired with proper motives. We may secure by their means an influence over others, that we may use for the promotion of their best interests. ‘There is a difference between wishing to please and wishing to give pleasure.’ Accomplishments are to be used, as all our talents should

be, not for our own gratification alone, or to procure us admiration or praise, but for His glory, to whom we have professed to consecrate all that we have and are. I remember a remark I heard a lady make, when I was quite a child, which struck me very forcibly and impressed itself on my mind. In speaking of personal attractions, she said, that 'beauty was a talent for the use of which we were as responsible as for other higher and nobler gifts of our Creator.' "

Mrs. Wharton spoke seriously, and feeling that the subject had been sufficiently discussed, she made some comments upon the occupation of her young friends, and shortly after, (the usual hour having arrived,) the circle was broken up.

Some time had elapsed since Annie's conversation with her cousin, related

in the last chapter, and still Helen's distress continued. She ceased to assume, any longer, a gayety which she did not feel, and though at times her natural vivacity of manners returned, she was usually grave and sometimes sad. She embraced with eagerness every opportunity of listening to the preaching of the gospel. She rose early and sat up late, that she might, without neglecting her studies, be able to attend the religious meetings held during the week, at Mr. Wharton's church, where a general and uncommon feeling of seriousness at this time prevailed. She was willing and anxious to converse with her cousin on the subject of her soul's welfare. She endeavoured to correct the faults in her outward deportment, and passed some time each day in her room with her Bible, or some religious

book ; yet still she was a stranger to peace. Annie counselled her in faithfulness and love, and prayed with her and for her, and sometimes hoped that she had really been born again, but Helen's mournful reply was still the same, "No ! no ! I am not a Christian. I do not love the Saviour ; I know that I ought to love him, but I do not—I cannot. My hard heart will not love Him."

And why was this ? What kept her soul from God, from happiness and peace ? Helen was unwilling to come as a guilty, perishing sinner, and trust Him, wholly, for salvation. She was trying to "work out" her own salvation without God's working in her. Her soul had asked, "wherewith shall I come before the Lord ?" and instead of seeking to be clothed with that robe of righteousness which the

Redeemer has obtained for us, she vainly thought, that by conforming her life to what she knew to be right, and by her prayers and tears, she might stand accepted before Him, in whose sight the "heavens are not clean." Helen would have been shocked had any one told her that this was her wish, or design. Her heart, "deceitful above all things," long concealed the truth from her. At length she perceived that her condition did not improve, nor her happiness increase. This conviction led her to redouble her prayers and tears, and now she placed her dependence on them, believing that they gave her a claim on the mercy of God, that He was bound to hear her cry, and that He would be unjust to her, if he did not; yet, in her words, she acknowledged her unworthiness, and professed to cast

away all reliance on herself, or on her own works, but her proud heart whispered all the while, "How very humble and penitent you are. God will certainly hear you now." But the Lord did not hear, for He hath promised salvation to those alone who, by faith on Christ, seek, in Him, their complete redemption; and from such simple, confiding trust, Helen's proud soul revolted.

If she could have secured heaven by the most painful penances and self-denials, by long prayers and fastings, she would have gladly done so; but to owe her pardon and salvation entirely to the merits and free mercy of another, she could not, would not, consent. She walked in "darkness and had no light," for there is but one source of light and peace to the wounded spirit, and that is the despised, yet glorious cross.

That the change in Helen's manner had attracted the notice of her family, Annie could not but perceive, but as no remarks were made to her upon the subject, she thought it best to say nothing at that time. She ventured once (having a favourable opportunity of doing so) to speak to Mr. Wharton of what was so near her heart. He gave her some useful hints as to her own duty in such a case, and expressed an earnest wish to see and converse with Helen himself. It was in pursuance of this desire, that, on the following Sunday, he appointed certain hours during the week, in which he affectionately urged those of his people who were interested in the subject of personal religion, to come to him for private counsel and prayer.

It was on the afternoon of that day,

that Helen with her father and Annie had been reading for some time in the parlour. After a while she closed her book, and resting her head on her hand, sat silently musing. There was an expression of deep distress upon her countenance, and it was evident that she could scarcely restrain her tears. Mr. Morton had watched her with much anxiety for some time, then approaching her, and seating himself beside her on the sofa, he said tenderly,

“What is the matter, my dear child? Why are you so sad? Are you not well?”

Helen started at the sound of his voice, and made an effort to speak with composure, but the tears rushed into her eyes, and with an evasive but respectful answer, she hastily left the room.

Mr. Morton was silent for a moment, then turning to Annie, who had been regarding them with the deepest interest, he said,

“Tell me, dear Annie, what is the cause of Helen’s unwonted seriousness and distress?”

With much emotion, yet freely and unreservedly, Annie answered her uncle’s question, her anxiety overcoming her natural reserve. As she proceeded, Mr. Morton became much excited and paced the room, in uncontrollable agitation.

“Does her mother know of this, or Julia?” he asked, stopping a moment before her.

Annie replied that she had long wished Helen to disclose her feelings to her parents and sister, but that she had been unwilling to do so; and that while she desired, herself, that they

should understand them, she had hesitated to introduce the subject. Mr. Morton continued to walk in silence for some time, then suddenly turning to Annie, he said, earnestly,

“I am not surprised. I do not blame Helen for her silence on this matter to her parents or her sister ; for truly we have given her too little reason to suppose we felt interested in her spiritual state, or in any thing beyond the vanities of this miserable world ; nor do I wonder that she sought you, dear child, for her guide, and looked to you at once for sympathy and counsel, for you alone have proved by your daily walk and conversation, that your heart and your treasure were in heaven. The Lord enable you to lead the soul of my precious child to her Saviour ! God bless you, Annie !”

and he turned quickly away and sought his own apartment.

At family prayers that evening, Mr. Morton betrayed much feeling. His usually calm and almost lifeless manner was changed into one most impressive and solemn, and the expressions of humility and penitence, of lowly trust in the mercy of God, through Christ, that flowed from his lips, and his petitions for wisdom and strength, that he and his household might begin a new life of devotion to the service of the Lord, were such as to subdue the hearts of those who bowed with him around the family altar. Mrs. Morton seemed much affected, and Helen was deeply so. As she turned to leave the room with the rest of the family, her father, who had remained behind them, calling her, said,

“Will you stay with me a few moments, my child?” Annie, closing the door upon them, retired to her own room.

“My dear father!” said Helen to her cousin, when they met the next morning, “he was so affectionate and kind last night! He feels so much for me, Annie. He wishes me to see Mr. Wharton this afternoon, and I am going to ask a favour of you. Will you go with me? I feel as if I could not go alone!”

Annie joyfully consented, for it had long been her wish that Helen should have the benefit of her pastor’s instructions.

Mr. Wharton appeared at once to understand Helen’s difficulties, though she could not speak as freely to him as she had done to her cousin. He saw that the natural pride of the un-

renewed heart was keeping her away from God ; that she was unwilling to accept salvation as a free gift, the purchase of the merits and sufferings of the Redeemer, and he conversed with her most faithfully and affectionately.

When Helen returned home from this interview with Mr. Wharton, she went immediately to her own room, and Annie, thinking it best for her to be left alone, did not follow her.

The evening shadows gathered round Helen, as she sat still in the seclusion of her apartment. She closed her Bible with a deep sigh, as the light faded, and mused long and sadly. She had been much agitated, but she was now calm, yet oh ! how miserable ! She had walked her room in agony of spirit—she had said within herself that for her there was no salvation,—that though others could

be saved, she must perish—that she had done all she could; she had mourned and wept and prayed, but the Lord had turned a deaf ear to her cry, and in her anguish she had most sinfully wished that she had never been born!

Then her pastor's parting words had recurred to her, and clearly and distinctly she perceived the gospel plan of salvation; but from her inmost soul, she felt a dislike to it. She would not be indebted to that Saviour whom she could not love, for her pardon and acceptance before God. But why could she not feel as others? She opened her Bible, and read slowly its description of the tragical scene on Calvary; but she felt no gratitude towards the innocent and holy Sufferer, though she keenly perceived her sin in not feeling thus.

She rose at last to leave the room. Her hand was on the lock of the door, but she paused a moment before turning it. "Shall I, indeed, leave this room, as I have left it so often before?" she thought. "Will it always be thus? Shall I never love the Saviour who has borne so much for me? O! I will go to Him, He can change this wretched heart; and if I perish, I will perish at His feet!" and Helen turned and sank again upon her knees.

"I have despised and hated thee, O most merciful Redeemer. I have done despite to thy Spirit, and refused to hearken to thy voice. Canst thou, wilt thou forgive such an one as I am? God be merciful to me a sinner!—Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Thus she besought the Lord with quivering lips and stream-

ing eyes. She looked from herself—from all human dependence—at once to Jesus. She felt that she was lost, unless saved by Him; and she cast herself upon his mercy, as all her refuge and hope. And He who is full of compassion, long-suffering, and of great goodness, heard that first truly humble petition from a soul that now, by the power of divine grace, was melted into submission and penitence before Him.

“Dear, dear Annie, tell me what it means? Can I, indeed, be a Christian?” said Helen to her cousin, as they sat alone together that evening, her face beaming with happiness, even amid the tears of joy and gratitude that filled her eyes. “That distress and heavy weight which have so long rested on my soul are gone! I cannot even think of myself now. I can

only think of my Saviour, my precious Saviour. How could I ever help loving Him?" and Helen lingered long and dwelt upon that theme which is the believer's crown of rejoicing on earth, and constitutes the burden of the song of the redeemed above.

CHAPTER IX.

SEVERAL days passed away after the occurrences mentioned in the preceding chapter, before Helen ventured to speak to her father, of the hope which she indulged, that she had passed from death unto life. Then, in a long and interesting conversation, she opened her heart freely to him, and Mr. Morton could not but rejoice with his child, in the conviction that the Lord had wrought in her soul that work of grace of which he is the author and finisher;—that she was indeed born again of the Spirit of God.

“My dear Annie,” (he said to his niece, on meeting her for a moment after this interview with his daughter,) “what do I not owe to you? To

you, under God, am I indebted for the salvation of my child. It was your example, your efforts and prayers, that led her to Jesus. God reward you for it!"

Every member of the household was struck by the change in Helen. Her happy, peaceful countenance, her gentle and affectionate manners, and her delight in the public and private exercises of religion, could not escape their observation. Annie noticed that Julia appeared more thoughtful, and that Harry sometimes looked with surprise at Helen, when by her manner, or by some involuntary expression of feeling, she disclosed the new principles which governed and animated her.

She wished Helen to speak unreservedly to them and to her mother on the subject; but, as she preferred

to delay doing so, for a short time, her cousin did not urge the matter, knowing that her aunt, at least, had been informed of it.

One evening, soon afterwards, as Julia was dressing for a party, she heard her cousin enter the adjoining room. She opened the door between it and her apartment, saying, "Do tell me, Annie, what is the matter with this dress? It looks so shockingly! I do not think I shall be able to wear it, unless you can arrange it. It is too provoking to have a new dress fit so badly!"

She spoke in a vexed tone, and looked troubled and out of humour; but as Annie cheerfully and patiently assisted her, the cloud passed from her brow.

"There! It looks quite like another thing. It only needed your taste and

skilful fingers ;"—and she glanced at her figure in the glass with much complacency.

"I wish you were going with me," she continued. "Miss Jones is to be there, and she plays so delightfully. You would enjoy it, I know."

"Perhaps I should," said Annie, "but," she added with a smile, "I shall enjoy the meeting to which I am going far more."

"What meeting?" asked her cousin. "This is not Mr. Wharton's usual lecture night."

"No ; this is a meeting intended for those who are desirous of more particular instruction—who are interested in the subject of personal religion ; and I am going with Helen."

An expression of unaffected seriousness passed over Julia's face, and she sighed. She busied herself in com-

pleting her toilet for a moment in silence ; then suddenly exclaimed with a forced gayety of manner :—

“ I suppose you and Helen think I am the most wicked person in the world. Well ! I cannot help it. You can be happy in your own way, and I will be happy in mine. Now, tell me, truly, Annie, what are you thinking about ? You have looked as solemn as a judge all the time you were arranging those beautiful flowers in my hair ; you surely were not thinking of them ? ”

“ No, not of them, dear Julia, but of the wearer.”

“ And, what of her ? Remember, now, the whole truth—I am to hear it all plainly.”

“ It may displease you.”

“ No, I will not, cannot be displeased with you.”

“Well, then, I was thinking how much happier my dear cousin would be, if she was going with us to-night, and wondered if she could ask the blessing of God upon her evening’s occupations,—if she could desire her Saviour’s presence in the scenes into which she will enter.”

Annie’s voice trembled slightly as she uttered these words.

“My dear Annie, you are so terribly solemn,”—said her cousin, the tears starting to her eyes.

“Forgive me, cousin, if I seem severe; you asked me to tell you truly my thoughts.”

“Are you ready, Annie? It is quite time for us to go,” said Helen, at that moment entering the room.

“How beautiful your dress is, sister,” she continued, glancing at Julia. The latter turned quickly away.

"Am I forgiven, dear Julia?" said Annie, lingering a moment behind Helen, as they were leaving the apartment.

"Yes! yes!" said Julia, sadly, "though you have spoiled all my enjoyment for this evening. But, go; Helen will be waiting;" and she kissed her cheek, and hurried her away.

Never had the contrast between herself and her cousin been presented so vividly to her mind as on this occasion; and bitter were Julia's reflections, and vainly did she seek to stifle the still small voice within, as she waited the arrival of a young friend who was to attend her to the party.

At the close of the meeting, the girls found Harry waiting for them at the door to escort them home, as was his usual practice. Their minds were so fully occupied by the important

truths which had been brought before them, that they did not notice that he was quite silent during their walk. The instant they entered the parlour, however, and the light shone on his face, they both observed at once that he looked sad, and with one voice they inquired what was the matter.

He hesitated a moment, as though trying to summon resolution to impart some painful intelligence; then observing that Annie became pale, he said, "Do not be alarmed, cousin; I have no sad news for you. Sit down here a little while. Mother is preparing for father's departure and mine, early to-morrow morning; for we have had mournful tidings this evening.—Arthur, poor Arthur is taken from us!"

"Arthur! Oh! Harry, do you really mean so?" exclaimed Helen,—

then reading in her brother's face the answer he could not speak, she wept bitterly. Annie, drawing her cousin closely to her, mingled her tears with her's. There was a long mournful silence. Harry's face was buried in his hands, as he stood with his back to the sofa on which they sat, leaning against the mantel, and struggling to control his agitation.

At last Helen regained her composure sufficiently to ask her brother some questions in relation to her cousin's death. In answer to them he handed her two letters. One was from a professor in the college, merely announcing his sudden decease, and the other from an elder student, an intimate friend of Arthur's, and contained a full account of all the particulars of his unexpected removal.

“On Friday and Saturday of last

week," wrote the latter, (after some preliminary remarks, expressive of his exalted estimate of Arthur's character, and his sympathy with his afflicted relatives,)—"my beloved and now happy friend complained of indisposition; but it was not so violent as to induce him to resort to medical advice, though he was not able to attend to his recitations, and passed most of his time in his room. He was, as usual, cheerful and submissive, expressing to me his willingness to depart whenever God pleased, though he did not seem to have any particular apprehension of the immediate approach of death. On Sunday morning, he was not so well, and I begged him to allow me to remain with him during the day. He expressed a strong desire to be alone, and entreated me, so earnestly and repeatedly, to join the

students in the chapel where they had assembled for public worship, that I at length was compelled to yield, and very reluctantly left him. I shall never forget his appearance, as I looked back, before I closed the door of his room. He was seated, wrapped in his dressing-gown, in his easy chair, with his Bible in his hand, his lovely face lighted up with a sweet smile, as he saw that I was complying with his wish. The expression of his face was truly heavenly. I was too anxious about him to remain long absent, and before the conclusion of the services, unable to overcome this feeling, I left the chapel and hastened to his room. I found the door bolted; and supposing that he was engaged in private devotion, I waited for some time, fearing to disturb him. At last I ventured to knock gently; but it was not

noticed. I repeated it without effect. I then called him by name, but there was no reply. I raised my voice and renewed my call, thinking he might be asleep. Still all was silent. A bitter foreboding—a dreadful apprehension seized me. Above his door, a small window communicated with the hall in which I stood, and helped thus to ventilate it.

“By the aid of a table, which I quickly brought from my own room, and a chair placed upon it, I soon obtained a view of that silent chamber. The scene that met my eye can never be forgotten. By the side of his bed, my beloved Arthur was kneeling in the attitude of devotion ; and near him lay his open Bible. His face was turned from me, and his cheek rested upon his clasped hands. There was something in his posture,—it was so fixed

—so lifeless, that I almost ceased to breathe, as I gazed. ‘Arthur!’ I at length said, in a low tone, fearing that he might be startled. Not a muscle of his slight form stirred, and without a moment’s delay I descended, and with the aid of my fellow-students, who had now gathered round the door, we soon entered the apartment, and bent over the lifeless frame of our dear friend! A smile of angelic sweetness hovered round his lip, and an air of beautiful repose rested on his noble brow; but the spirit,—the happy, redeemed spirit,—had passed from its tabernacle of clay. In agony of heart we laid him upon his bed, and medical aid being promptly at hand, every effort was used for his restoration, but in vain. His Master had come and called for him; and even while the breathings of devotion were rising

from his loving spirit—had his prayer turned to praise—his faith to sight—his hope to perfect fruition.

“‘No trumpet’s note was required to call thee home,’ said Professor L. as he bent over his pupil’s lifeless form,

‘For thou so near the throne,
In faithful love hadst pressed,
There needed but a *whispered tone*
To call thee to thy rest.’”

“Dear, dear Arthur!” exclaimed Helen, as Annie finished reading the letter to her, “it seems so dreadful that he should die alone!”

“Alone!—he was not alone!—His Saviour was with him, and he sank to sleep as if upon his breast. Oh! it was so sweet for him to depart, while in the very act of prayer!”

“But my poor uncle and aunt! what a dreadful shock to them!”

“God will support them, Helen,” said Annie, soothingly, and in a low tone she repeated many of the precious promises of the Lord to his afflicted people, and dwelt upon that theme so full of consolation to the mourner, the perfect and unchanging blessedness of the loved and lost, who “sleep in Jesus.”

Helen listened and grew calm, and at length yielded to Annie’s solicitations (after a short interview with her parents) to retire. Annie persuaded them all to follow Helen’s example, and to allow her, with a domestic, to wait for the return of Julia, who was now expected home every moment. She sat beside Helen’s bed, and talked and read to her from the blessed word of God, until she sunk to sleep, and then she returned to the parlour, wondering that her cousin was so much

later than usual. She remembered their last conversation. Oh! how little did she anticipate the tidings that were to reach them, or the sorrow that was to fall upon their hearts, before that evening closed. Annie felt how unprepared poor Julia would be, after the festivity of the gay scenes in which she had mingled, to hear the sad news; and how great and sudden would be the change of thought and feeling, when the mind was thus unexpectedly turned from the gayeties of life to the realities of death and eternity.

The sound of an approaching carriage, and the ringing of the bell, apprized her of her cousin's return, and a moment after she entered. She expressed surprise and regret that her cousin had waited for her, and began in a gay tone to give the reason of her being so late. Excitement had given

a glow to her face, and as she gracefully threw aside her hat and cloak, she looked so very beautiful that Annie felt how great the attractions of the world must be, to one so fitted to adorn its circles. She shrunk from imparting the painful intelligence, and it was some moments before she was able to do so. Julia was much affected by the news of her cousin's death, though she said but little. Annie, deeply feeling that her own reflections were more likely to be salutary than any thing which she could say, did not endeavour to draw her into conversation, but accompanying her to her room, assisted her to undress.

"Take it away, dear Annie, I feel as if I never wished to see it again," she said, as she laid aside her gay dress. "How differently would this

evening have been spent, had I known what I do now; and yet I could not have been more miserable!"

"Yes! miserable," she continued, observing Annie's look of surprise, "for your parting words were constantly in my mind. Oh! Annie, I have been doing wrong, very wrong. I see it now as I never did before. Had I been called as dear Arthur"—she paused and burst into tears. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." Annie's kind and sympathizing nature would have prompted her to soothe and comfort her cousin; but she was too anxious for her best welfare, not to point out to her affectionately wherein she had erred, and to lead her, in deep contrition, to "arise and go to her Father." Julia, whose heart seemed quite subdued, confessed, with bitter tears, her wanderings from the

path of peace. "I have sinned against Heaven and before thee," was the language, not only of her lips, but of her broken spirit. "I have often been peevish to you, and neglectful," she said, as they parted at a late hour that night. "Forgive me, dear Annie, and help me henceforth to live as I ought, and as, by the grace of God, I am now resolved to do."

This resolution, by divine aid, Julia Morton was enabled to keep. Days and weeks passed away after the departure of Arthur Willis, and the impression his sudden and peaceful death had made on the hearts of his relatives, still continued to influence their lives, and to bring forth fruit to the glory of God.

Mr. Morton's was indeed a changed household. His resolution had become strengthened; that let others do

as they would, as for him and his house, "they would serve the Lord." Mrs. Morton had been much affected by the loss of her nephew, for whom she felt almost the tenderness of a mother. This affliction, in connection with the faithful counsels of their pastor, and the silent influence of the change in some of the members of her own family, led her to regard the duties of the Christian's life in a very different light from what she had done before.

Her daughters and her niece seemed now to have but one mind and heart, and, enjoying that communion of spirit, which in its sweetness affords a foretaste of the bliss of heaven, were the helpers of each other's joy.

Helen soon publicly professed herself to be on the Lord's side; and Harry, though not so openly decided,

by his serious deportment, his constant and interested attendance on the means of grace, gave much satisfaction and hope to those who loved him.

The peculiar and striking circumstances attending the death of Arthur Willis, in connection with his uncommonly lovely character, made it deeply felt, not only by all who had enjoyed his personal acquaintance, but by those to whom the facts only were known.

Mr. Wharton improved the event by a very solemn discourse to the young people of his charge, in which he spoke with much feeling of the life and death of the beloved youth, and of the "meetness" which he so early attained, by the grace of God, "for the inheritance of the saints in light."

When, with deep fervour thou didst lowly kneel,
Oh! didst thou think this was thy last breathed
prayer?

And did thy pleading spirit know and feel
Bright angels present,—Christ, thy Saviour there?
Yes! they were with thee! Thou didst sink to
rest,

Gently on His loved bosom, and wert borne,
To dwell in His fair mansions with the blest,
While angels tuned anew their joyful song,
That thou, redeemed, hadst entered there, no more
to mourn.

And we have laid thee in thy lowly grave,
Knowing that thou, more glorious, wilt arise;
That He, who died from sin and death to save,
Will soon descend "triumphant from the skies."
Then shall we gaze once more upon thy brow,
Then meet thee whom our sorrowing hearts de-
plore,

And hear again thy voice, and with thee bow
Before the throne of God, to part no more,
And tears and sighing, there unknown, be ever
o'er!

CHAPTER X.

"THOSE who honour me, I will honour," repeated Mr. Sherwood, as he observed the affection and respect with which his beloved child was regarded by the friends gathered round her, the evening preceding her departure from the city. He had listened to the warm praises of her uncle and aunt, and noticed the almost unbounded attachment of her cousins; and now he saw her surrounded by others who had called to express their regret at parting with her, and their hope of meeting her again. Among this number were Mr. Wharton and his wife, who were truly grieved to say farewell to their young friend. Mary

White and Mr. Graham were there ; the latter being particularly delighted with an opportunity of meeting the father of his early friend, with whom he enjoyed a long conversation. Never was Mr. Sherwood more deeply sensible how richly his efforts to train up his children in the way of holiness had been crowned with success, than on this occasion.

He had heard one, who was now an able and faithful minister of the gospel, ascribe his conversion, under God, to the efforts of his son ; and he had beheld the happy results of his daughter's firm adherence to the principles early implanted in her breast ; and his soul was truly grateful. Annie's countenance expressed mingled feelings. She was delighted to see her father again, and rejoiced at the prospect of return to her happy home, and

yet a tear sometimes trembled in her eye, and a passing shadow rested on her brow, when she remembered, that this was her last interview, perhaps, for a long time, with some who were very dear to her. Mary White, with the disinterestedness that marked her character, strove to conceal her own feelings, for her friend's sake; and Julia, perceiving the effort she made, tried to imitate the example of one who was now again her chosen companion. But Helen was by turns gay and sorrowful; sometimes describing in her usual lively manner the happy hours they would pass together in days to come, when they visited their relatives that summer, or when Annie was again their guest; and then suddenly changing her tone, she would mourn over the anticipated loss of their cousin's society, and wonder

how they could possibly do without her.

"God bless you and make you a blessing, my dear child," said Mr. Wharton, as he parted with Annie, that night. Her manner expressed the thanks she could not speak. Her young friends still lingered, unwilling to say farewell,—the low tones of their voices, and the silence that sometimes prevailed, expressing the sadness which had stolen over them.

"Let us sing once more together," said Julia, at length, seeking to change the thoughts of her companions. "Mary, will you play for us that sweet little song we all know—the 'Parting song?'"

"Come, Annie, we must have your help; and you, Mr. Graham," and drawing her cousin's arm in her's, she gathered them all round the piano.

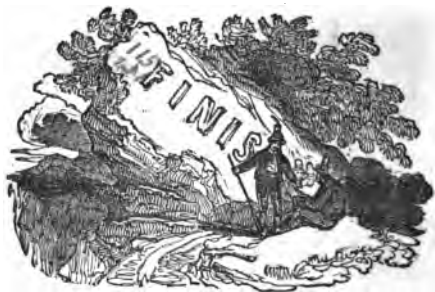
The music was soft and plaintive, and accorded very sweetly with the words, which were simple and touching, and then more than usually so.

It was a bright spring morning, and all nature looked fresh and gay, when the carriage stood before Mr. Morton's door, that was to carry Annie Sherwood from her city home. She lingered a moment to repeat those parting words which, while they swell the heart, the tongue is so slow to utter; and her father, having seen that all was ready, now re-entered the parlour to express again his earnest hope that they would all visit his country home that summer.

"Remember, you are included in the invitation," he said to Mr. Graham, who stood waiting to hand Annie to the carriage; "the friend of

my son must always be welcome beneath my roof."

Annie and her father were soon seated, and the door of the carriage closed. As they left the house, Annie bent forward and smiled through her tears, as she caught a last look of the little group she was leaving; then leaning back as the carriage rolled quickly away, she mused in silence on the varied incidents that had marked this first visit to her city cousins.



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